

NINTENDO GAMECUBE • DS • GBA
N·GC
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N·GC POCKET INSIDE
EXCLUSIVE FIRST LOOK!
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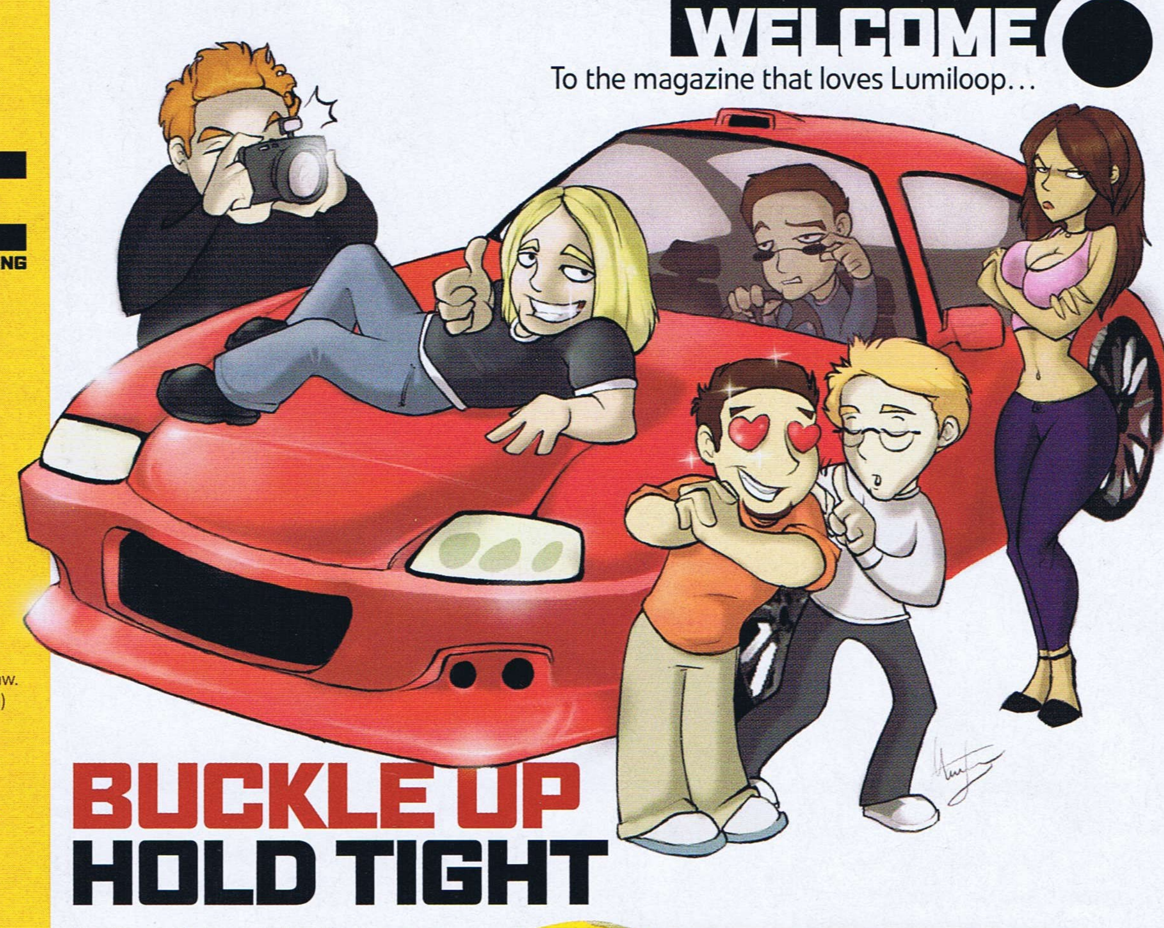
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# BUCKLE UP HOLD TIGHT

Like Garven Dreis, just before his shot at the Death Star's exhaust port in Episode IV, we're 'almost there'. Yup, E3 is upon us and you can taste the sweat of excitement wafting through the office. Revolution is coming, DS online is coming, *Mario 128* is coming (maybe) and most importantly, our clammy hands are just days away from giving *Zelda* a thorough workout. If you want to know more about this truly momentous occasion, head on over to page 6 for some brand spanking new shots that you *won't see anywhere else*. Well, not until E3 anyway.

Also summer is nearly upon us, too. While it's often a slow time for gamers, it's not for Nintendo and although we don't have loads of Gamecube reviews this month, in **NGC** Pocket we have two of the finest DS games you'll ever play, in *Electroplankton*, and *Touch! Kirby*, as well as a raft of other handheld marvels. And If that's not enough, there's also the small matter of *Need For Speed: Most Wanted*. Enjoy...

**TEAM NGC**


**TURN OVER THE PAGE!**
*See if you can guess how long Car Girl's arm is. Spindly. Very spindly.*


NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED

**SUBSCRIBE TODAY!**
Go to page 75 to find out how you can get **NGC** delivered direct to your door, before it hits the news stands. With a free copy of *Viewtiful Joe* too.




## WHY WE'RE No.1 FOR NINTENDO

**NGC's the result of over a decade of gaming genius – so you're the best-informed Nintendo gamer around.**

■ First there was the SNES, and Super Play came out alongside it – fanboys rejoiced.

■ A new machine meant a new magazine – but one with the same high standards.

■ Now we've got Gamecube, and you've got **NGC**. That's 13 years of Ninty love right there.

# NGC'S FIVE STAR GUIDE TO WHAT'S UNMISSABLE THIS ISSUE!

**1** PAGE 16

## NEED FOR SPEED: MW

**MY GOD! IT'S FULL OF CARS!**

We meet the Senior Producer of the best-selling series.

**2** PAGE 32

## FIRE EMBLEM

**TURN BASED TACTICS**

One of our favourite strategy series returns to a home console. Never heard of it? Check out our ridiculously detailed preview…

# NEED FOR SPEED MOST WANTED

PAGE 16

Holy mother of mod! Check out the first screens of the world's biggest racer…
















3 PAGE 42

4 PAGE 68

## HARVEST MOON
**SONG OF HAPPINESS**

We remember a time when all this was just mud…

5 PAGE 76

## UNSUNG HEROES
**YOUR FORGOTTEN FRIENDS**

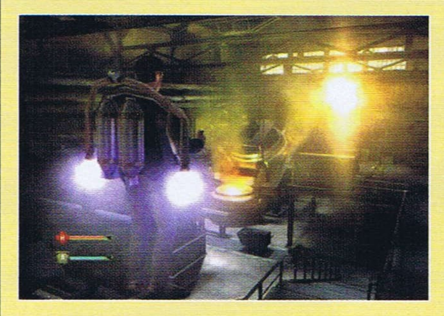
A special tribute to those we take for granted…

# WHAT'S IN NGC?

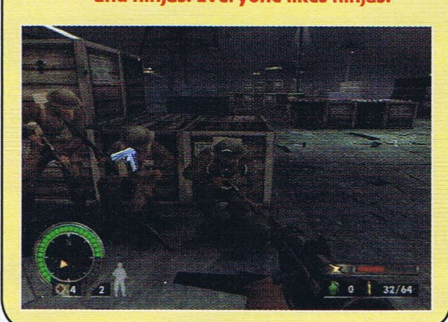
Everything worth knowing for this month – and beyond…

## PREVIEWS

Amazing new games coming your way.







## NEWS

The latest rumours, truths and goings-on.





## EXTENDED PLAY

Getting more from your favourite games.













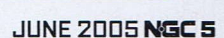
## REVIEWS

Ways to blow your hard-earned cash.











## OUR PROMISE

Our search continues for a means of finding newsworthy information two months before it actually happens. See, ever since we put Madame Greener out of her misery behind the NGC barn (using the NGC shotgun) our clairvoyant powers have waned. Paul's idea of a Time Travelling News Surfboard was, frankly, rubbish. So it's back to business as usual.

NGC BRINGING YOU NEWS FIRST

# NEWSDESK

## IN NEWS THIS MONTH







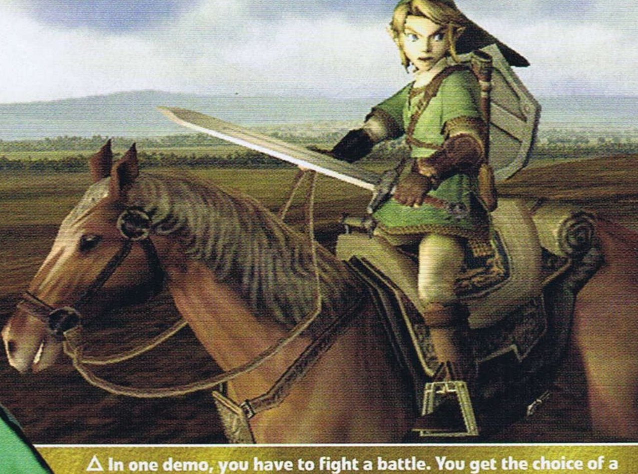
△ It seems like horses will have a much more prominent role to play in the new *Zelda* game.



△ Toaru (reminiscent of Kokiri Forest in Ocarina of Time) looks set to be the game's starting point.

# NEW ZELDA SHOTS

**Cold hard facts on the biggest game of the generation...**



△ In one demo, you have to fight a battle. You get the choice of a sword or the bow, which no longer has infinite range.

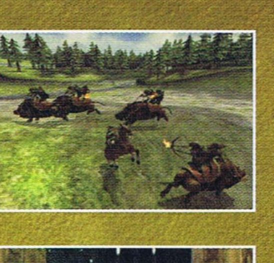
New shots! Three brand spanking new shots of the biggest game on the planet. And you won't find them anywhere else either – not until E3 anyway – so hopefully these will act as a nice little teaser before the main event in May. Even better though, is the raft of new information we have received...

You see, it turns out that this new Zelda is set to be the most epic yet. According to *Zelda's* producer Eiji Aonuma, the new game will be two to three times the size of *Ocarina of Time* – a vast 70 hour adventure.

So what will we see at E3 then? We know of three mini-demos so far. The first is a little village called Toaru. This area is quite sizeable, and the large numbers of NPCs that you can talk to and interact with, help give it a strong, rural farming community feel. Toaru will undoubtedly be Link's starting point in the game, as many of the tasks to be found there essentially make up the game's tutorial.

The second demo takes place on a ranch. This plays like a classic Zelda mini-game. Here you have to get on horseback and herd cow-like animals into a stable before the time runs out. There's also another mini-game demo which sees Link facing off in a jousting battle on top of a stone







bridge. Link's equine abilities, it seems, will feature heavily.

In one demo, Link has to fight a huge enemy and his boar-riding henchmen in (what we still presume to be) Hyrule Field. Link can choose between a bow and a sword to dispatch him. The bow no longer has an infinite range, which means that Link will have to advance and retreat on the enemy, avoiding the henchmen, to deliver successful blows with his weapons.

That's pretty much all we know so far until we finally get our hands on the game next month. Although there is one more detail… Link's age has been confirmed as 16 – and, rumour has it, he will slowly mature as the game progresses, and will also sport a variety of new costumes…

# WHAT ABOUT REVOLUTION?

## WILL THE REVOLUTION BE TELEVISED (AT E3)?



While many rumours on the web have suggested that we won't see anything of Revolution at E3, a Nintendo spokesman told **NGC** "we have always said we'll share our vision of Revolution at E3." Nintendo have also said that we won't get to play any Revolution games at the show, but we expect them to show us what the machine looks like, tell us how it works and also show off some videos of in-game footage, maybe even a video of *Mario 128*. Reginald Fils-Aimee has said that we'll find out if *Mario 128* will be on Gamecube or Revolution at E3, but with Nintendo needing a big hitter to launch its new console, we wouldn't be too surprised to see *Mario 128* debut on Revolution.

As if showing off one console isn't enough, it is also rumoured that Nintendo will be showing off a brand new Game Boy. Although there is no news as to what it will look like, we are expecting to see a powerful new handheld that will be the true rival to PSP. As for other hardware news, there will be more information on the DS's online capabilities.

With Revolution, *Mario, Zelda* and *Pokémon*, Nintendo are bringing out the big guns for E3 and if they show off a new Game Boy, this will be Nintendo's strongest year ever.

## STARS OF THE SHOW

### THE BIGGEST GAMES AT THIS YEAR'S E3

### POKÉMON



**What we'll see:** Other than *Mario 128* and *The Legend of Zelda*, probably the most intriguing game at E3 will be *Pokémon XD*. We've been promised a console Pokémon RPG before, but this is the first time it has actually happened, so we're looking forward to seeing how hardcore it will be. Then there's *Pokémon Diamond* and *Pearl* on DS, which should be the perfect game for the handheld's all-new online service.

### METROID



**What we'll see:** Unlike last year, it doesn't look like there'll be a Metroid game for Cube (unless Nintendo decide to surprise us). Instead we'll get to play *Metroid Prime: Hunters*. Anyone who has already got a DS will have played the demo, but seeing as it's going to be the launch game for DS's online service, it will get a big push at E3 and we should get to play more multiplayer modes.

### MARIO



**What we'll see:** This is going to be a busy year for Mario. We've already told you about *Mario 128*, but we'll also see the plumber pull some funky shapes on the dancefloor in *Dance Dance Revolution with Mario*. But the one we can't wait to play is *Mario Kart DS* – we'll get to try out the new tracks and also have a go on the new multiplayer mode. Then, of course Mario is set to play a starring role in *The Sims 2* (see page 9 for details).

### ADVANCE WARS



**What we'll see:** Nintendo have moved *Advance wars: Under Fire* off the release schedule. Or in other words, they decided that it will need more work before they can release it. But *Advance Wars DS* will be playable, so we'll be trying out the new interface, which has you controlling the air forces on the top screen and the ground forces on the bottom. This should also feature online play.

## E3 2005

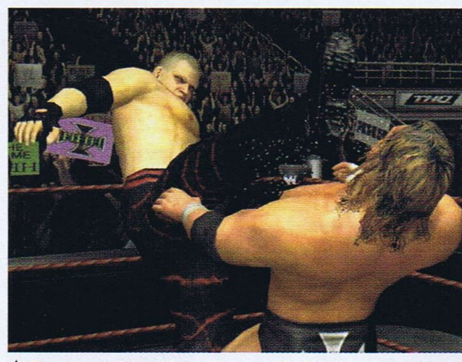
### BIG GAMES LIST



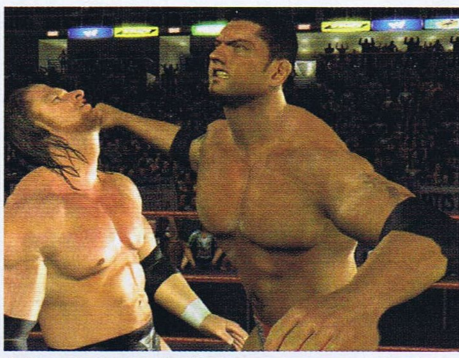
A quick run down of what we'll be seeing at E3 2005 next month.

Charlie & The Chocolate Factory
Fantastic Four
Digimon World 4
Call of Duty
Snowboard Kids DS
Trauma Centre: Under the Knife (DS)
Starcraft Ghost
One Piece: Grand Battle! (Cube, DS)
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe
Killer 7
Mega Man Battle Network 5: TC (GBA)
Mega Man Battle Network 5: TP (GBA)
Phoenix Wright (DS)
The Movies
Geist
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent (DS)
James Bond 007: From Russia With Love
Madden NFL 2006
Medal of Honor: European Assault
Need For Speed: Most Wanted
Batman Begins
NCAA Football 2006
Castlevania DS
ATV: Quad Frenzy DS
Nanostray (DS)
Gumby Vs The Astrobots (GBA)
Pac-Man World 3
Shogun Warrior: Real-Time Conflict (DS)
Harvest Moon: Song of Happiness
Harvest Moon: More Friends of Mineral Town (DS)
Shadow the Hedgehog
Big Mutha Truckers DS
Bratz (GBA)
Fairly Odd Parents DS
The Incredibles 2 (Cube, DS & GBA)
Nicktoons
Power Rangers (GBA)
Scooby Doo Unmasked
Spongebob Squarepants Party (Cube, DS)
WWE Day of Reckoning 2 (Cube)
Crash Tag Team Racing (Cube, DS)
The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction

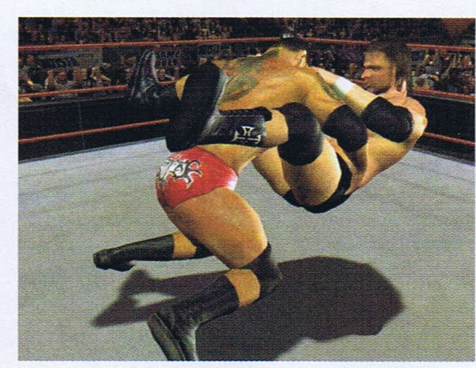




△ Sweat and blood have been added to the wrestlers along with enhanced ring-walks and cutscenes.



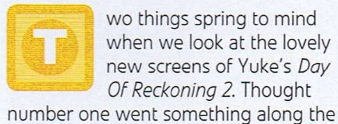
△ Extra facial detail added by motion capture has been harnessed to show emotion as well as physical pain.



△ The crowd have developed an extra dimension too, making them far more rounded and credible.

# CRY ANOTHER DAY

## **Embrace the pain** as Day Of Reckoning reveals its new face

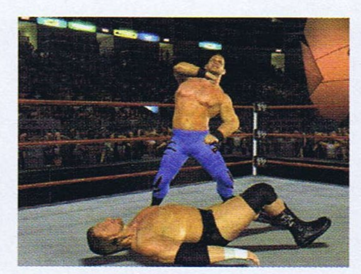


Two things spring to mind when we look at the lovely new screens of Yuke's *Day Of Reckoning 2*. Thought number one went something along the lines of: 'The 30% extra polygons used, combined with those enhanced textures really give those faces a wonderfully realistic look'. Thought number two was: 'Ooh, I don't fancy yours that much'.

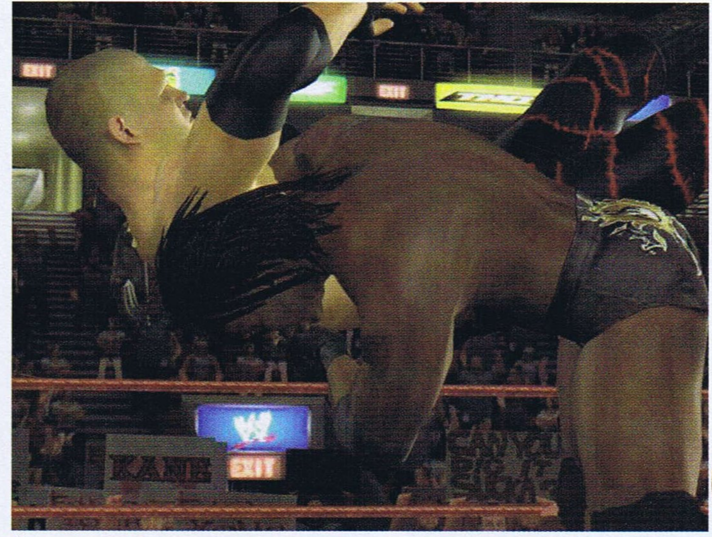
But *Day Of Reckoning 2* is promising to be much more than just an ugly face. THQ's main priority has been to iron out the button-mashing that marred the original. So maintaining your stamina will play a much larger role in grappling strategy and every submission move will come with options; either to regain your precious strength, to go for the win, or risk having your move reversed by a more skilful opponent.

The story also builds on the first *Day of Reckoning* by putting you at the top of the pile, looking down. As the game begins you already have the title under your somewhat preposterously large belt and so the tale, as penned by the Smackdown writers, branches in a variety of potential directions as you tread an emotional path as a 'face' or 'heel' (for the uninitiated, that's a wrestler that fights dirty or clean).

With 45 sweaty beauties to get to grips with including, Booker T, Kane and Triple H, *Day Of Reckoning 2* could be as easy on the eyes as the original was hard on the thumbs. We shall keep you informed.



△ Getting hit makes you lose stamina, so you have to balance your aggression.



△ The moves available to you will be decided by what kind of wrestler you become.

# PAC-MAN 'STILL HUNGRY'

## **The happy eater** returns in Pac-Man World 3

△ Pac-Man will be able to roll back the years with a variety of balletic leaps and ballistic punches.



Pac-Man is 25. Born in 1980, the custard-yellow spectre-eater fell in love in 1981, and, with Ms Pac-Man, sired a round child on a loading screen in the same year. But now the pensionable spheroid looks set to bounce back with a new adventure.

When the world of Pac-Land and the Spectral Realm collide, Pac-Man has to confront and defeat the evil Erwin, but to do so he needs the help of his old enemies, the ghosts. So in-between chewing on a vast array of delicious power-ups, Pac-Man displays his new acrobatic agility and ability to control the equally doddery undead pair of Pinky and Clyde.

With Pac-Man now in his autumnal years, Blitz Games will fittingly help the old chap onto Gamecube in the autumn.







△ Defeat evil foes with the power of your co-op chums.

# ONE GOOD TERM DESERVES ANOTHER

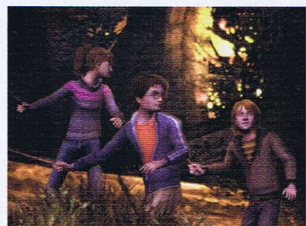
**The boy-wizard returns** for another sequel. Now there's a surprise…

There is no time to pause in the world of Harry Potter. Not only because he lives in fear that the warm, sweaty palm of puberty will steal his innocence at any moment, but also because the sixth book, the fourth film and the fifth game about him are all due this year.

Set for DS, GBA and Gamecube in November, *Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire* will again mix JK Rowlinginit's book and the film by following the wannabe warlock through the Triwizard Tournament, a battle with dragons, the Quidditch World Cup and yet another showdown with Voldemort.

Electronic Arts have promised that the fresh features will be added to the new *Potter*, promising that those perennial sidekicks Ron and Hermione will both be playable and that a co-operative mode will allow three players to combine their magical powers to harness new tricks.

As with every pre-released EA game – it looks very pretty. We'll see how it plays when we go hands-on with Harry (no, not like that) at this year's E3 show.





△ The kids have been modelled on their new hormone-filled forms.



# MARIO MOVES IN WITH LITTLE COMPUTER PEOPLE

***Yet more Sims get set*** for releases on Gamecube, DS and GBA in the autumn





The little dungareed plumber must be starting to feel like a piece of shareware, passed from user to user. After all these third party games – playing baseball with Namco, balling with EA and shaking his amble booty with Konami – the itinerant Italian is now ready to set up home with Maxis in *The Sims 2*.

However, instead of the Nintendo icon simply earning a few extra Simoleans by fixing a few dripping taps in a reduced version of the PC game, Maxis are keen to innovate in all three versions instead. So for the first time ever in the series, you will be able to directly control any one of your Sims, but only once you have sated their six desires or wants. Instead of watching them slowly wet themselves or get trapped behind a chair, you will be able to pull the camera down to sit on their shoulder and make them watch TV or go round to the neighbours to flirt in a new battle-like social mode.

Food will also play a vital part in the fun, with the Sims being able to pick up 47 different raw ingredients from the shops or garden and combine them to form nutritious, delicious or dangerous meals, which can be used to please or poison the 60 other story driven Sims in the game. There is even a 'Love Cake', which will make your little chef utterly irresistible. Unfortunately, we don't quite know how Mario will be integrated into the game – will we be able to abuse and humiliate him as we have every other Sim under our control?

We will reveal if we can resist the charms of the little people in the next few months as all three versions of the game will arrive on over here on 17th September.

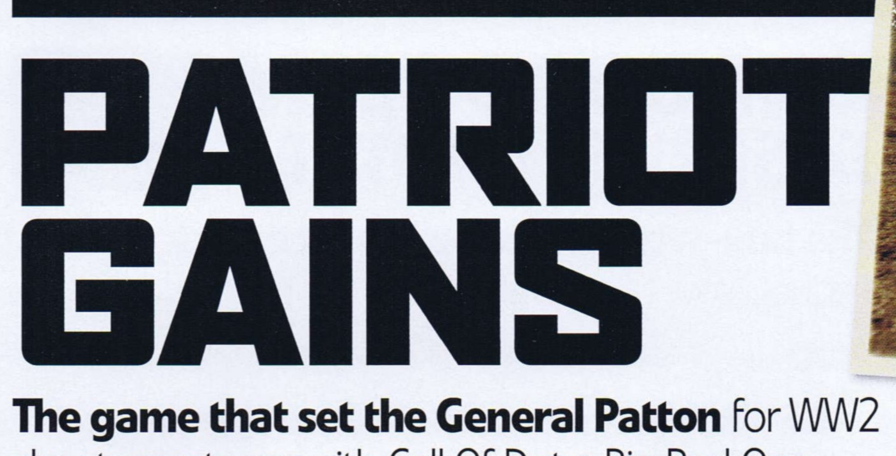
## SHORT CUTS



### VIEWTIFUL SMASH BROS?

**No, we don't mean Viewtiful Joe *in Smash Bros* – rather VJ starring in a game that may well *resemble* Nintendo's fighter. Set to be unveiled at this years E3, the game is tentatively titled *Viewtiful Joe: VFX Battle* and, by the looks of things, will shun the side-scrolling action of the previous two games, in favour of arena-based one-on one battling.**

**With this new style of play comes a host of new characters, many of which come from the anime now showing on TV in Japan. Joe and Sylvia return, obviously, as well as Joe's rival, Alastor, Captain Blue, his son Junior and a female baddie called Sprocket. Each character will be pitted against each other – with the key to victory being to fight as beautifully as possible and to stand out more than your rival. The more stylish your attacks, the more V Points you earn and the more likely you are to win.**



# PATRIOT GAINS

## **The game that set the General Patton** for WW2 shooters returns with Call Of Duty: Big Red One

Soldiers in trenches who were shot at, shelled and starved for six years feel less war-weary than we do. The endless WW2 docu-dramas, re-enactments and anniversaries have left a taste in our mouths worse than any ration-era meal of powdered egg and spam. But if anything can encourage us to reserve another table at this bloodstained bistro, it is the autumnal return of *Call Of Duty*.

> **ACTION FROM NORTH AFRICA TO NORMANDY, VIA BELGIUM AND ITALY**

Subtitled *Big Red One*, this sequel will no longer bounce the player from Russian pinko to American patriot, instead following one unit and one man – a GI in the 'Fighting First', the US Army's First Infantry Division. This historically accurate gang of grunts still manage to notch up their air miles, seeing action in Normandy, North Africa, Belgium, Italy and on the road to Berlin.

Along with the change of front line personnel, the backroom boys from developers Spark have also been replaced with Gray Matter (*CoD: United Offensive* on PC) and Treyarch (*Spider-Man: The Movie*) and we hope to get a grip at the delicious fruits of their Gamecube-shaped labours in the very near future.

■ With the action focused on just one squad, a far stronger narrative structure has been added, hopefully increasing the amount of emotion and immersion you feel in each battle. The death of long-serving men and officers will be more of a dramatic event than a routine hazard.

■ Despite being an infantry division, your boys will also battle the forces of fascism on the high seas, in the air and on land. With the unit involved in Operation Overlord you can expect a *Medal Of Honor*-style amphibious landing on Omaha beach and a jeep-based battle at Mons in Belgium.

■ If you hadn't twigged yet the *Big Red One* name refers to the 1st Infantry's bright red shoulder badges. And these boys are famous for being the first US soldiers into action, as they began fighting and dying with the British Eighth Army in North Africa almost a year before D-Day began.

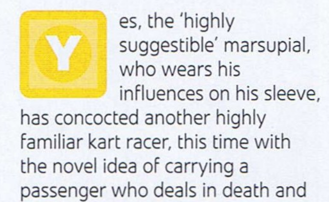
■ The armoury of authentic weaponry and equipment now includes Italian items and French firearms as both sides have been added to the war. You have extra moves too, including new vehicle controls, the ability to sprint and the skill to 'cook' grenades so that the Nazis have no time to kick them back at you.

# CRASH'S DOUBLE-DASH?

## **The Bandicoot is back** in *Tag Team Racing* for GC and DS, but can anyone else smell mushrooms?



△ Well, this doesn't look much like a racing game, does it?



Yes, the 'highly suggestible' marsupial, who wears his influences on his sleeve, has concocted another highly familiar kart racer, this time with the novel idea of carrying a passenger who deals in death and food-based power-ups.

But before you turn your jaded eyes elsewhere, you should know that you can split the fused karts in two at any point during the race. And then rejoin them later to cause more carnage. Stranger still, you can explore the level on foot, looking for extra weapons and probably some wumpa fruit.

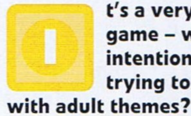
Anyway if you are going to borrow something from a more famous game it might as well be one that was so joyful, so sublime that only the dead and retro-miserablists could fail to fall in love with it. So we wish Gamecube coders Radical Entertainment and DS developers Sensory Sweep, the best of luck. Perhaps they can include the option to put a bag on Crash's hideous head.





# KILLER 7 INTERVIEW

## **Before we launch into the review next month** we had the chance to sit down for a chat with the game's producer, Hiroyuki Kobayashi…



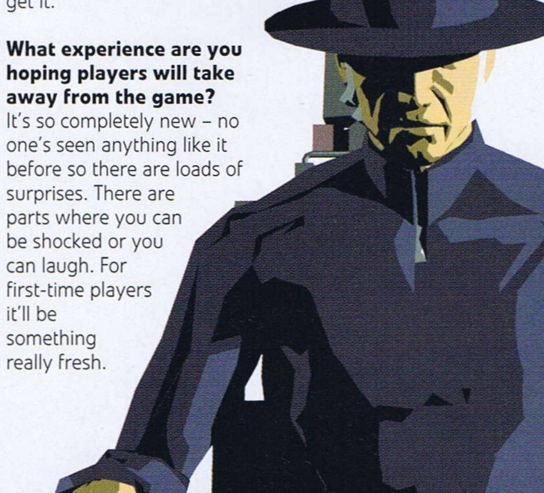
**It's a very violent game – were you intentionally trying to shock with adult themes?**
Director Gouichi Suda has a huge imagination. He just wanted to express himself, like using blood as fireworks or as a water fountain. It's not there to shock people. As for physical abuse, Suda wanted to show the stark contrast between two situations. When Harman is paralysed for example, Samantha, his nurse, abuses him – she's a very domineering character – but when Harman awakens and becomes an assassin she's a maid who serves Harman.

**What about the strange control scheme, how did that come about?**
Suda wanted to break out from traditional console control, so he deliberately put character movement onto the A button rather than the analogue stick. It's something that's never been done before, but you get used to it. Just press the button and the character moves.

**Was it always intended for Western release?**
It wasn't intended for a specific audience – we just wanted to make a new concept for a game, and this is what we've done with *Killer 7*. Looking at the finished product, we thought that the artwork would be appealing to a European market, and the themes of the US and assassination would be appealing to a US audience.

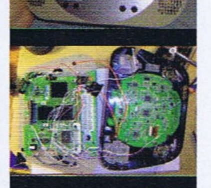
**How many people do you think will 'get' it?**
We don't want to say that this will only be appealing to the core gamer. The game is very unique, but even casual players, who like films like Kill Bill, will go for it. They would get it.

**What experience are you hoping players will take away from the game?**
It's so completely new – no one's seen anything like it before so there are loads of surprises. There are parts where you can be shocked or you can laugh. For first-time players it'll be something really fresh.



## SHORT CUTS





### N64 PORTABLE

**Now *this* we like. It mightn't be the most 'portable' unit in the world (threatening to yank your trousers down in one swift motion if you dared put it in your pocket) but we have to give maximum respect to Ben Heckendorn, the fellow who made it. The device has been constructed out of a smashed up N64, an N64 joypad and a portable monitor. Each has been ripped apart and painstakingly wired together to create the unit you see before above. Quite how he managed it is beyond us. Even the casing has been finished off beautifully – with N64 carts sitting perfectly inside the unit with no ugly overhang. If you want to know more, check out *www.benheck.com* for the full story. And check out the amusing 'Cave Test' where he has a DS illuminating a giant squirrel and an albino ferret. Lovely.**

# Nintendo Nutters

**Pointing and staring** at the crazy fools who take their love for Nintendo just a little bit too far. Look! Look!

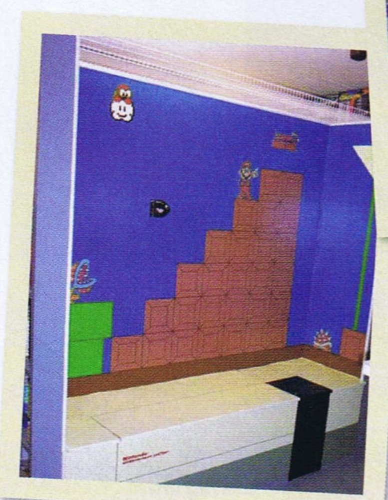


## DO YOU TATTOO?

Much to Paul's dismay, this has nothing to do with Russian lesbians, but rather a bloke called Dennis Julabard who's gone to extreme lengths to show his undying love for all things Nintendo. On his forearms he's assembled a skin-searing collage of Mario, a mushroom, a star, some *Tetris* blocks around one wrist and a triforce. Classy stuff, Dennis.







## GET A ROOM

Now we always thought the **NGC** office had a games collection to rival the best of them, but this fella, who goes by the name of Gibby, has really put us to shame. This is a just a small glimpse of, what has to be, the most impressive games collection in the world, with enough NES cartridges along one wall to kill a rhino. That's not all though – the room has been lavishly decorated in a Mario/NES style, and there are more consoles, collectables, peripherals and point-of-sale shop cases and stands crammed in than we ever thought humanly possible. If you have a collection to rival this, send a picture of it to Nintendo Nutters, NGC, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW.

# LAST, BUT NOT LEAST...

## Namco's ultra-hardcore Hello Kitty: Roller Rescue.

Rumours say it will 'make you cry like a baby'



■ You'll be able to cutomise your Kitty to wear full battle dress (not pictured). We've heard of loads of people who have actually *gone inside* 'Kitty's Closet' – never to be seen again*. Unsettling.

■ Those blue squares are Kitty's enemies. It's up to her to stop them from taking over her hometown. Presumably using her trusty scythe and hammer*.





■ Don't let his smiling face and trendy barber-shop jacket fool you. Underneath that friendly exterior beats the heart of a ruthless killer*. Kitty ought to watch who she hangs around with.



■ Kitty will be able to 'rip-up da streets' with her colourful wheely-shoes. Tricks will include everything from the obligatory 'grinding' to the more painful 'wesside donkey-kiss reversal'*. Sick.

*Note, none of these 'Kitty' facts are remotely true

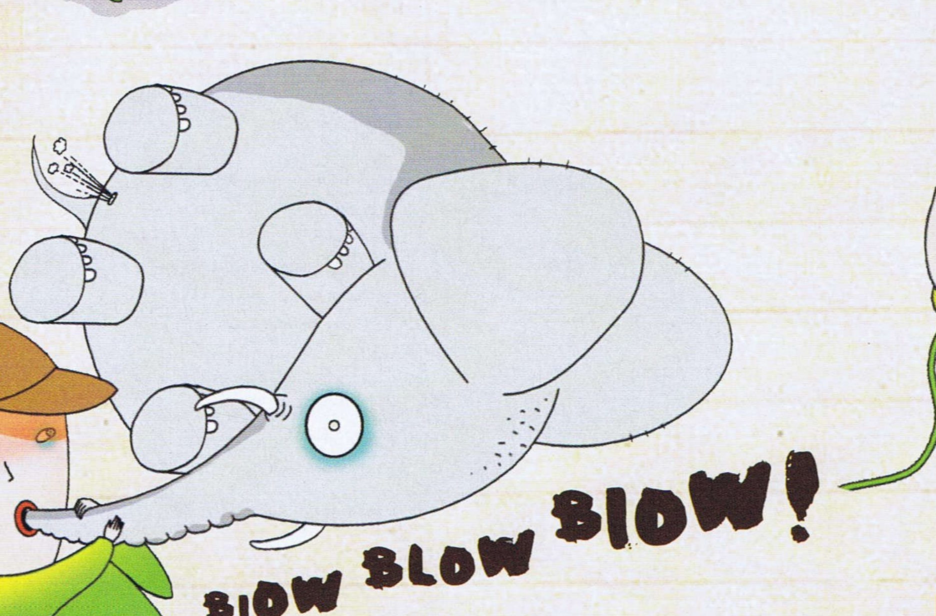



# Blow them away!

Blow'n'control!



Become the champ!



Blow blow blow!



Don't you cheat!

## YOSHI Touch & Go

Yoshi is back to face off against the evil Kamek. Guide him through a world of danger and adventure by scribbling with the Nintendo DS stylus – and blowing into the built-in microphone. It's easy to pick up, but tough to master. Blow that high-score away!

WWW.NINTENDO.CO.UK

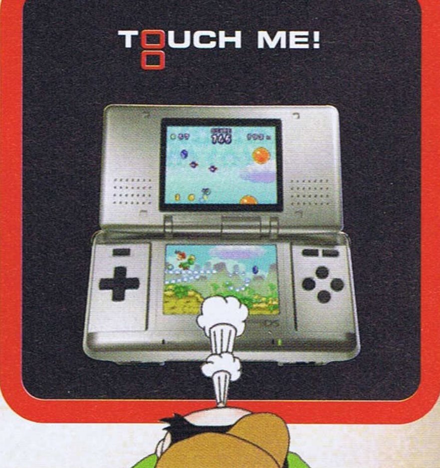


Game over!



Out 6th May

TOUCH ME!



# ULTRA RELEASE LIST

The latest on every Nintendo system game in development – updated monthly!

## UK RELEASES

The most accurate listing available – but slippages can occur. We're not psychic, goddamit. All titles Gamecube unless otherwise stated.

### MAY

| Date | Title | Publisher |
|---|---|---|
| 27 | Need For Speed Underground 2 (DS) | EA |
| 27 | Pac-Pix (DS) | Namco |
| 27 | Ultimate Brain Games (DS) | Telegames |
| 27 | Ultimate Card Games (DS) | Telegames |

### JUNE

| Date | Title | Publisher |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | Wario Ware Twisted! (GBA) | Nintendo |
| 7 | Chicken Little | Buena Vista |
| 7 | Chicken Little (GBA) | Buena Vista |
| 9 | **NGC out today!** | |
| 13 | Touch! Kirby (DS) | Nintendo |
| 17 | Batman Begins | EA |
| 24 | Killer 7 | Capcom |
| 24 | Mario Party Advance (GBA) | Nintendo |
| 24 | Madagascar (GBA) | Activision |
| 24 | Madagascar (DS) | Activision |
| 24 | Medal of Honor: European Assault | EA |
| 28 | Riviera: The Promised Land (GBA) | Atlus |

### JULY

| Date | Title | Publisher |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Bomberman (DS) | Ubisoft |
| 1 | Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Chaos Theory (DS) | Ubisoft |
| 3 | Donkey Konga 2: Hit Song Parade | Nintendo |
| 5 | Kim Possible 3 (GBA) | Buena Vista |
| 15 | Fantastic Four (GBA) | Activision |
| TBC | Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 4: Lockdown | Ubisoft |
| TBC | Nanostray (DS) | Buena Vista |

### AUGUST

| Date | Title | Publisher |
|---|---|---|
| TBC | Blades of Thunder 2 (DS) | Summitsoft |
| TBC | Lost in Blue (DS) | Konami |
| TBC | One Piece (GBA) | Bandai |
| TBC | Texas Hold 'Em (DS) | Majesco |
| TBC | The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction | Vivendi |
| TBC | Zatchbell | Bandai |

### SEPTEMBER

| Date | Title | Publisher |
|---|---|---|
| 6 | Cinderella: The Game (GBA) | Buena Vista |
| 6 | Lizzie McGuire 3 (GBA) | Buena Vista |
| 6 | That's So Raven 2 (GBA) | Buena Vista |
| 6 | Frogger (DS) | Konami |
| TBC | Scooby-Doo! Unmasked | THQ |
| TBC | Scooby-Doo! Unmasked (GBA) | THQ |
| TBC | Scooby-Doo! Unmasked (DS) | THQ |
| TBC | Spartan: Total Warrior | Sega |
| TBC | SR Monkey Team Hyperforce Go! (GBA) | Buena Vista |
| TBC | Ultimate Card Games (DS) | Telegames |
| TBC | W.I.T.C.H. | Buena Vista |

### OCTOBER

| Title | Publisher |
|---|---|
| Geist | Nintendo |
| Metroid Prime: Hunters | Nintendo |
| Midway Arcade Treasures 3 | Midway |
| Backyard Skateboarding (GBA) | Atari |
| Odama | Nintendo |
| Pac-Man World 3 | Namco |

### SUMMER TBC

| Title | Publisher |
|---|---|
| Danny Phantom (working title) (GBA) | THQ |
| Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney (DS) | Capcom |
| Lunar Genesis (DS) | Ubisoft |
| Pac-Man Pinball (GBA) | Namco |
| Tak 3 (working title) (DS) | THQ |
| Yu-Gi-Oh! Nightmare Troubadour (DS) | Konami |
| Zoo Tycoon (DS) | THQ |

### AUTUMN TBC

| Title | Publisher |
|---|---|
| Castlevania (working title) (DS) | Konami |
| King Kong (DS) | Ubisoft |

### WINTER TBC

| Title | Publisher |
|---|---|
| Animal Crossing (DS) | Nintendo |
| Castlevania (DS) | Konami |
| The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe | Buena Vista |
| The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (GBA) | Buena Vista |
| The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (DS) | Buena Vista |
| Crash Tag Team Racing | Vivendi |
| Dragon Booster (DS) | Konami |
| EverGirl (working title) (GBA) | THQ |
| Finding Nemo (DS) | THQ |
| Fire Emblem | Nintendo |
| Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire | EA |
| Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (DS) | EA |
| Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (GBA) | EA |
| Marvel: Rise of the Imperfects | EA |
| Nicktoons (working title) (DS) | THQ |
| Peter Jackson's King Kong | Ubisoft |
| Peter Jackson's King Kong (GBA) | Ubisoft |
| Peter Jackson's King Kong (DS) | Ubisoft |
| Prince of Persia 3 | Ubisoft |
| Prince of Persia 3 (GBA) | Ubisoft |
| Prince of Persia: Warrior Within (DS) | Ubisoft |
| Snowboard Kids DS | Atlus |
| Spongebob Squarepants (working title) (DS) | THQ |
| Starcraft: Ghost | Vivendi |
| Texas Hold 'Em (DS) | Summitsoft |
| The Incredibles 2 (working title) (DS) | THQ |
| Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon 3 | Ubisoft |
| Scratch! Viewtiful Joe (DS) | Capcom |

## YOUR MOST WANTED

Which games are you most looking forward to? Scribble them on this form, cut it out, send it to us and you'll be entered in a prize draw to win a copy of *Pac-Pix*.

1. ..........
2. ..........
3. ..........
4. ..........
5. ..........

Name ..........

Address ..........

Postcode ..........

Send your entries to Your Most Wanted, NGC magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW

## NGC MOST WANTED

The games we're dreaming about (and in some cases, playing)…



**1 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA** NINTENDO

Looking better and better with each new set of screenshots and eye-popping video footage. It's the **NGC** team's odds-on favourite to have the longest queue at E3.

**IN A NUTSHELL:** The *Zelda* everyone wanted in the first place.

**2 KILLER 7** CAPCOM

Bloodier and filthier than one of Kittsy's 'special' home movies – it's a game that's hard to get your head around, but we can't help but love every minute of it.

**IN A NUTSHELL:** It's an interactive anime of quite bonkers proportions.

**3 NINTENDOGS** NINTENDO

Three different versions featuring three sets of dog breeds, this could be the cutest game ever to be conceived. We reckon this puppy will sell by the sack load.

**IN A NUTSHELL:** Get a bunch of mutts and poke them with your stylus.

**4 FIRE EMBLEM: TRAIL OF THE FLAME** NINTENDO

For those of you not happy with *Advance Wars'* change of direction, *Fire Emblem* will satisfy your strategy needs.

**IN A NUTSHELL:** *Advance Wars* with fantasy and RPG trappings.

**5 SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR** SEGA

A hack 'n' slasher from the makers of the *Total War* series. Includes screen filling battles of quite epic proportions.

**IN A NUTSHELL:** Death on a ludicrously large scale. Kittsy loves it.

# NEED FOR MOST WANTED

**The underground goes overground** and reveals its mix of mods and coppers.


△ Unlike *Burnout*, the damage engine will be toned down.


△ Fancy betting against *Most Wanted* becoming the Christmas number one?




## ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT



**Despite *Need For Speed*'s long life, it has mostly been developed in-house by Electronic Arts' Black Box team. Originally it was a Canadian team known as Pioneer Productions who were behind the game's PC and 3DO debut, but since then the team's title has changed and now the same Maple Syrup swillers are part of EA Canada. Best known for the *FIFA* series, this huge team has also worked on *NBA Live* and *NHL* as well as the *SSX* series of snowboarding games, which Larry LaPierre (NFS:MW's producer) was also senior producer on.**

They say that justice is blind; it's just the way that the cops drive. They also say that the wheels of justice turn slowly, but that certainly isn't true in *Most Wanted*. You see, the insane cops in EA's latest street racer don't care if the punishment fits the crime, instead these dual carriageway crime-fighters will ram you off the road for a broken brake light or even a lapsed tax-disc. In *Most Wanted*, justice must make a scene to be done.

Zero tolerance is to be the police's one and only policy in this, the natural successor to the *Hot Pursuit* strand of the long running *Need For Speed* brand. So, if you so much as slow down near a disabled parking space or if breaking the speed limit so much as crosses your mind, you'll get six black and tan cop cars on your tail, while a hovering helicopter shines a spotlight through your sunroof.

And these porcine cops certainly have a bee under their blue bonnets about something and it

**"ZERO TOLERANCE IS THE POLICE'S ONE AND ONLY POLICY IN NFS:MW"**



# NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED

"Cop presence is where the real danger is at"

## THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

How NFS became the biggest racer in the world.



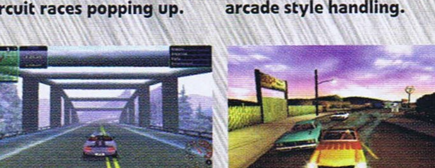
**THE NEED FOR SPEED**
The 3DO was the first machine to feel the *The Need For Speed* back in August of 1995, although expanded PC, PSone and Saturn versions were later added by Pioneer Productions a year later. Despite being based on what passed for a realistic physics model back then, the game was already showing its arcade tendencies, with street and circuit races popping up.



**NEED FOR SPEED II**
Attempting to emulate the success of the original, this 1997 sequel frustrated PC and PSone gamers alike by including buses and even a UFO amid the prototypes and Porsches, while also omitting the fuzz and any sensation of speed. Despite being the first NFS game to include real licensed cars, it also added modified cars and shifted the series further toward the more arcade style handling.



**NEED FOR SPEED III: HOT PURSUIT**
The cops came back with a vengeance for this 1998 follow up, released on PC and PSone. The return of the rozzers also saw the spiked Stingers added to their armoury, along with Lamborghini panda cars. The Simulation mode and realistic physics were finally jettisoned in favour of an arcade-style control system, but an online mode was added for PC players.



**NEED FOR SPEED HIGH STAKES**
Dividing opinion straight down the middle, this 1999 update is either a crawling rehash of *Hot Pursuit* or an excellent enhancement, where the new Getaway mode maximises the chasing fun. How you remember the game seems to depend on how powerful your Pentium was.



**MOTOR CITY ONLINE**
Although not officially part of the *NFS* series, this PC only title was originally created and launched as part of EA's brand. Designed as an online car-RPG, it used much of the technology from the PC version of *High Stakes* but aimed more at serious simulation than speed or ease of play.





**NEED FOR SPEED PORSCHE UNLEASHED**
Staying solely with the Porsche, this PC and PSone version performed well enough, despite some pretty fiddly controls. The damage engine from *High Stakes* was vastly improved, and the Evolution mode allowed you to progress through a garage of classic Porsches.

**NEED FOR SPEED HOT PURSUIT 2**
Finally showing its face on the Gamecube, the *NFS* series debuted with a return to its roots. Despite the huge number of races, the new helicopter opponents and some frantic chases, the port from the PC and PS2 hampered the Cube version.

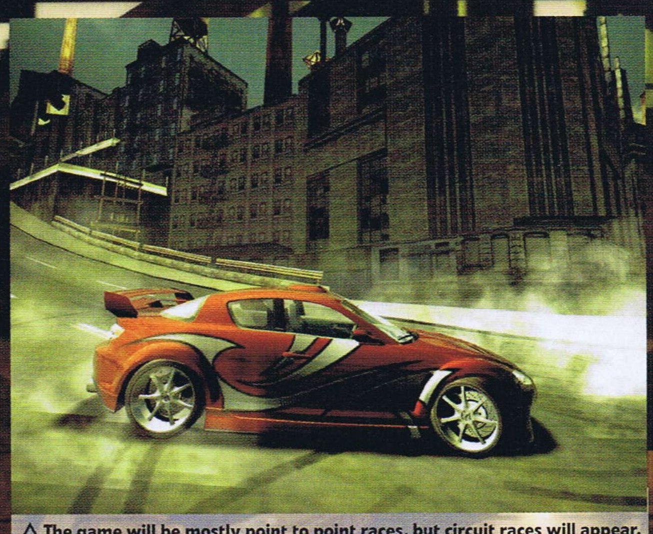
**NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND**
With EA's finger firmly clamped on the cultural pulse, the series took its first step into the dark in 2004. With flash effects and an almost infinite range of opportunities for tinkering, the number and variety of the races went unseen due to the strobe-like stuttering of the frame-rate.



**NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2**
Using the open city of Bayview instead of a menu, this sequel tried to tie the racing world into a narrative of street racing, littered with nitrous oxide-aspirated engines, customised cars and air-headed babes. Similar flaws to the original undermined the effect though.



△ Mercifully, the lack of a story element should diminish the role of 'characters' like Kelly Brook.



△ The game will be mostly point to point races, but circuit races will appear.

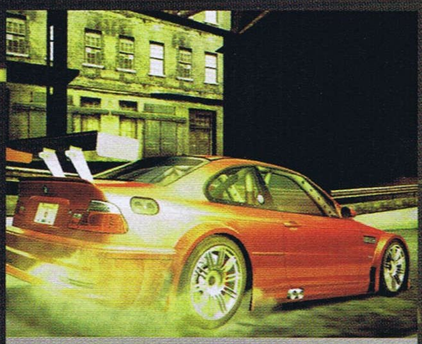
isn't just the donuts that have gone undunked during this high-speed pursuit. It's probably the fact that the 15 million people worldwide who bought *NFS: Underground* and *NFS:U2* tore around their city, racing, chasing and flouting every law in their flaming skull-stickered saloons with matching neon-lit body kits. That would be enough to test the patience of even the most lenient of the city's law enforcers.

So, in an attempt to bring justice back to the highways and byways of their street racing syndicate, the same Electronic Arts team responsible for the lawlessness of both *Underground*s have fused the highly polished, high speed, Hollywood street racing of that series with the race and chase, rough and tumble fun of the Pursuit mode from *Hot Pursuit 2*. They've also shunted the action out of the ever gloomy Bayview and into a world of daytime street racing, where you don't need to worry about jams, zebra crossings, congestion zones or traffic cones, but you can thrive, drive and get caught by the fuzz.

As Larry LaPierre, a Senior Producer at developers EA Canada told us in an exclusive interview; "For *Need for Speed Most Wanted*, we are turning up the tension a notch or two to deliver a much edgier experience. Racing at night is one thing, but trying to race during the day with all the traffic and cop presence is where the real danger is at."

# NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED

NFS: Underground meets Hot Pursuit



Δ Unfortunately you won't be able to 'mod' your suit for you court appearance. Sorry.



Δ We are still waiting to see how much of an on-screen HUD display the team decide to go for.



Δ There is a contest for gamers' own decals and designs to be included in the finished game.



Δ Some of the events will let you race from the coast all the way to the centre of the state.



Δ Real time weather effects ensure that the environments change as you race ever onward.



Δ Boston, Philadelphia and New York are rumoured to be the inspiration for the roads.

So as you cruise the brilliant streets of such rumoured destinations as Boston and New York, you'll need to keep it legal or risk attracting the eagle eyes of the Sweeney. Even if no laws are being broken at the precise moment that the rozzers spot you, the fuzz will somehow remember you from the last time you did something naughty. Which, perhaps, might have something to do with your engine sounding like Darth Vader with a chest infection, the blasting boom box playing a branded 'pumping' EA soundtrack and the six-foot long dragon painted across the bonnet of your car.

> "FOR NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED, WE ARE TURNING UP THE TENSION A NOTCH"

Not that keeping a low profile will get you anywhere in this game; just as with *Underground*, building up your notoriety in the street racing 'scene' is vital to your progress through the game. So if you want to ascend from low-life kerb-crawler to respected wheelman, you will need to set some sirens wailing to build up your reputation and get a few black marks on your Rap Sheet. For it is through the Police's records of your wrong-doing that the game monitors how you are advancing, so the more parts of the Highway Code that are violated, the closer you are to hitting your goal, becoming the *Most Wanted*.

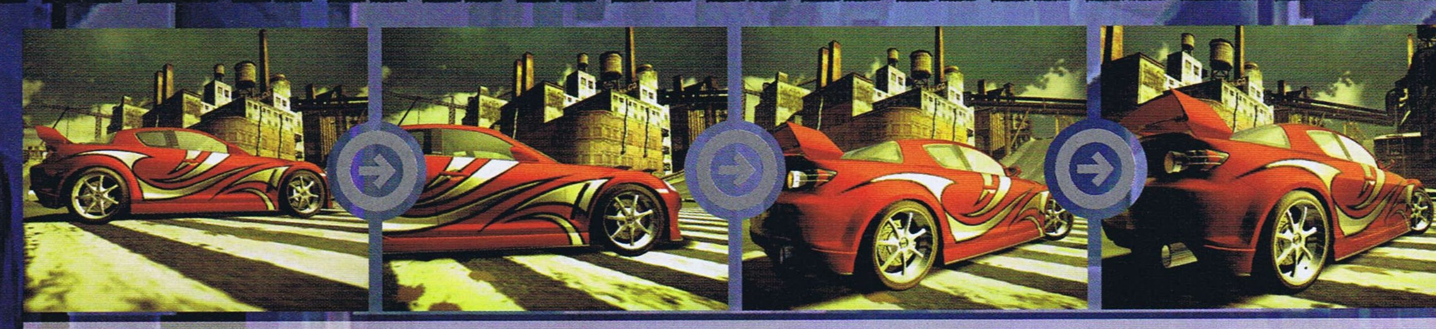
At the moment, the EA team are being very secretive about how the cops will mark the merits of your motorised mayhem, but Larry LaPierre did move his cards away from his chest for a moment when he confirmed that "the police will have many degrees of escalation. Part of the challenge in *Need for Speed Most Wanted* will be to engage the police in a little 'cat and mouse' while being aware of what too much heat will result in."

Clearly on a revelatory roll, he continued: "You'll have to keep your wits about you once they latch onto you to shake them loose. There are many levels of cop escalation or 'heat' and many strategic tactics you can use to ditch them. The key for us is to create moments that feel real and intense. Imagine when you first see the lights come on in your rear view mirror; the hair on your neck stands up and you grab the steering wheel so hard your knuckles go white."

Obviously, the closer you get to the top of the wanted list then the more numerous, persistent and

# NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED

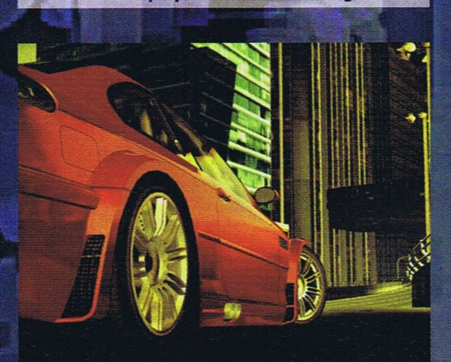
"It could get a little hectic"



△ As well as being able to run from the cops, you can now taunt them. This may go some way to increasing your standing on the Rap Sheet.



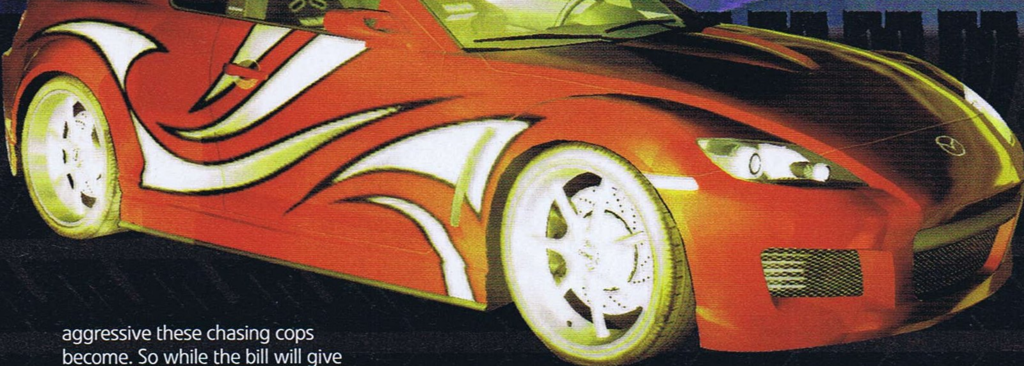
△ We are still waiting to see how much of an on-screen HUD display the team decide to go for.



△ The handling is more arcade in feel, there's no realistic simulation here, we're afraid.



△ Shortcuts have always been a major part of the NFS experience, hopefully *Most Wanted* will include more than the linear *Underground*.



aggressive these chasing cops become. So while the bill will give up their pursuit pretty quickly if the crime is petty, anyone who has evaded the grasping arm of the law numerous times can expect up to six Fiat Pandas (or not) on their tail at any time with the promise of copper's choppers providing an unblinking eye in the sky, it could all get a little hectic.

Despite seeming to be a bigger contradiction in terms than 'friendly fire', the Canadian team are also keen to push the improved 'police intelligence', promising that the following filth will no-longer simply wait for you to pile head first into a brick wall, but will in fact deploy accurate convict-stopping tactics developed in co-operation with real chase experts. And just to prove how much guile these cops now possess, you will even be able to turn their faces as blue as their shirts by performing various inflammatory stunts such as handbrake turns and donuts while in mid-pursuit.

The only thing we don't know at the moment is how far the frustrated fuzz will go in deploying spiked stingers, roadblocks or even employing faster FBI cars in their quest to stop your road bound rampage. After all, in *Hot Pursuit 2* explosive barrels were unleashed from hovering helicopters to permanently stop you from speeding again.

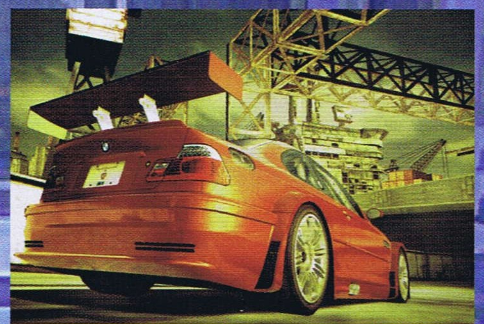
All of this action will unfold seamlessly because, instead of a menu-driven system of unlockable cars and modes, the entire game will be accessed through an open-ended city, much like the one seen in *Need For Speed Underground*. So instead of racing around the blank, blacked out world of Bayview, *Most*



△ Instead of the perpetual night of *Underground* all the action will take place in daylight.



△ The list of licensed music remains unconfirmed but you can expect a suitable hip collection of hop hits.



△ Sadly there are no plans to include the Vauxhall Chavalier or the UK modder's favourite, the Nova.

*Wanted* will transport its racers to the east coast of the US, where the four urban areas will teem with traffic, modders and rozzers who will keep an eye on you while you cruise through the dynamic and shortcut-laden world.

However, staying out of jail isn't the only reason for raising your wheel skills, because impressing your underground rival is even more important than irritating the law and order overlords. So you need to forge yourself a reputation as a racer by going head to head with other road users and abusers, mixing and matching muscle cars against souped up SUVs, making friends and new enemies until both sides of the law are after you.

But racing isn't the only way to climb the 'Black List', as it is called; certain tarmac scorching moves will improve your credibility and score, as will the inevitable car modifications and spares.

As our close pal Larry explains; "Customisation is still a huge part of *Need for Speed Most Wanted*. Players will be able to upgrade the performance of their cars to race against any class of vehicles, as well as outrun the cops. Players will also have the challenge of managing their heat meter to keep the cops off their tail, and one of the key ways they can do this is to take their car into the shop and change its appearance."

> "THE POLICE WILL IN FACT DEPLOY ACCURATE CONVICT STOPPING TACTICS"

At the moment, however, Larry won't say which machines can be modded, but he has promised that there will be "an exciting mixture and breadth to the cars scheduled to appear in the game; this will include tuners, supercars, muscles and sports cars."

Similarly the amount of visual damage that each car can take is also up for discussion, although at

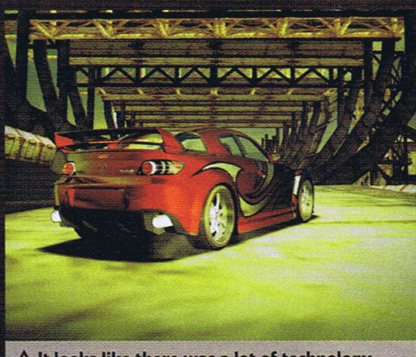
## THE SKIDS ARE ALLRIGHT

**'Pimping your ride' in Britain has in the past meant nothing more than a lovingly applied coat of Turtle Wax but in the US the scene started after WW2, where old Fords were turned into hot rods. Cheap oil and the rise of Japanese imports, such as the Honda Civic, saw the movement rise again in the early 90s, but this time with cash and celebrities behind it such as Eminem and G Unit. Now the mod culture has taken hold over here, with live events selling out huge venues like Alexandra Palace and Tim 'my dad's the bishop of Worcester' Westwood even bringing the TV show Pimp My Ride to these shores.**

# NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED

"Customisation is still a major part of NFS:MW"

△ A sheep in wolf's clothing is still a sheep, and a RX8 with a body kit, 12 inch rims and dropped suspension is still a RX8.



△ It looks like there was a lot of technology shared between *MW* and *NFSU2*.



△ EA have been resolutely tight lipped about which cars will be included in the finished game.



△ The *NFS* series is called *Over Drivin'* in Japan and only features East Asian cars.

## THE NEXT BIG BLING



**From chandeliers to 42 inch TV's and even fish tanks, what you can add to your car remains limited by only your imagination and how much weight the suspension can take. Obviously a Gamecube and screen is a must, but what would our mucker Larry do to his dream machine? "I would love to get my hands on a Peugeot 306 XSI. I would bake this thing with all the best parts. I'd tint the windows, lift it 6 inches and put big monster tyres on it" he said. Don't worry, he lives in Canada.**

the moment it looks most likely that the game won't match the car-carnage seen in *Burnout*, preferring a more 'cosmetic' amount of scrunch and grind to go with the forgiving, arcade-style handling.

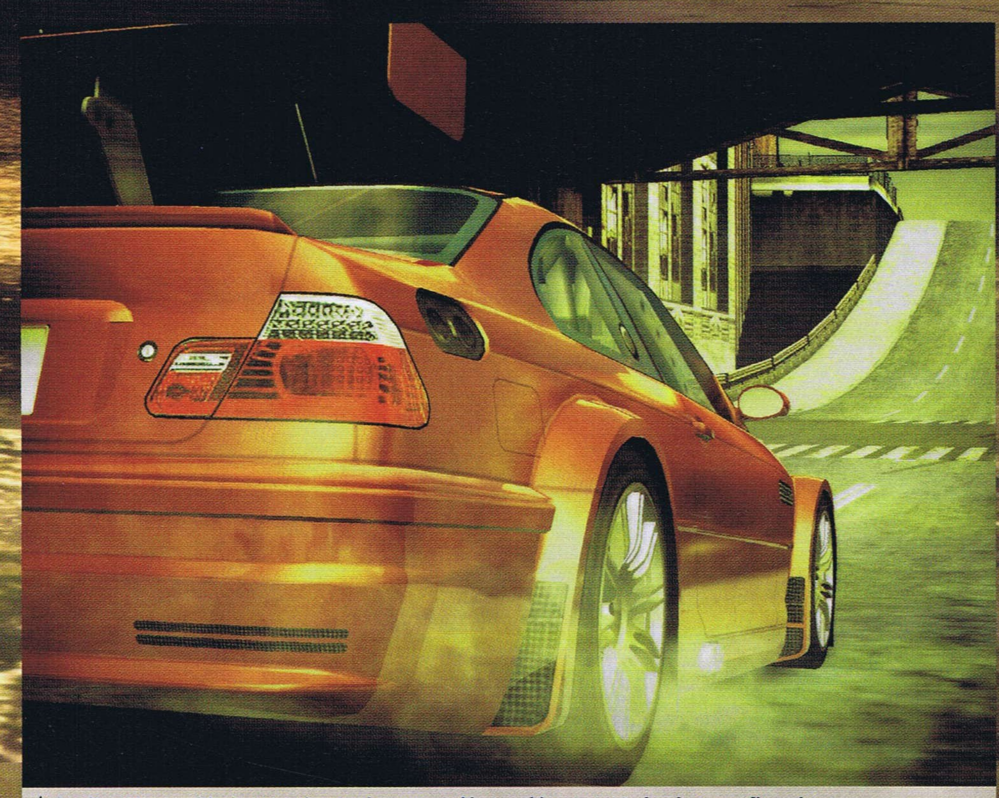
**"THE ROAD IS CLEAR FOR NFS: MW TO BE THE MACHINE'S MOST THRILLING RACER"**

While the Pursuit mode has been revealed to the world, the team are still keeping quiet on the extra modes that can be expected in *Most Wanted*, although rumours are mounting that the game will in fact feature eight different options. The most interesting of which involves collecting speed camera photos of your crimes and racing in a knockout competition based on how much cash your antics are costing the cops in dollars. However, at the moment one mode is missing, the self-explanatory, and highly popular, You're The Cop, which did so much to lift the otherwise mundane *Hot Pursuit 2* out of the mire.

There are still many elements of *Most Wanted* to be revealed before we get to see it again at E3, not

# NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED

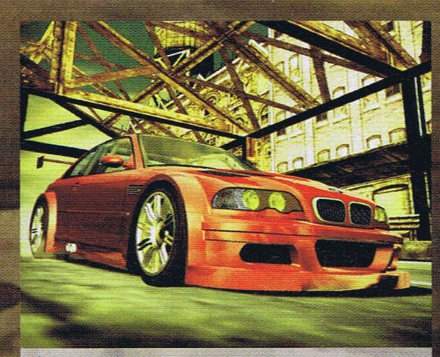
NFS: Underground meets Hot Pursuit



△ A split-screen multi-player option can be expected but nothing concrete has been confirmed yet.



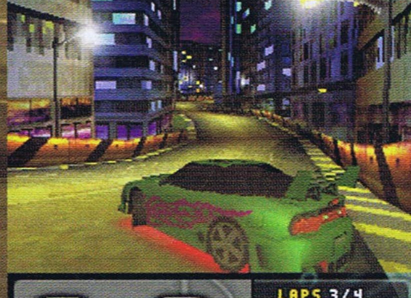
△ It's been hinted that anti-radar and speed camera mods will be included.



△ Dynamic set-piece events and scripted actions should help you in your bid to escape the law.

## POCKET ROCKET

EA like to make sure that no-one misses out on any of their products, so after releasing *Need For Speed Underground 2* in board game and cuddly toy form, a DS version is now due in May. Which will give us just enough time to complete it before *Most Wanted* lands on our desk in November.



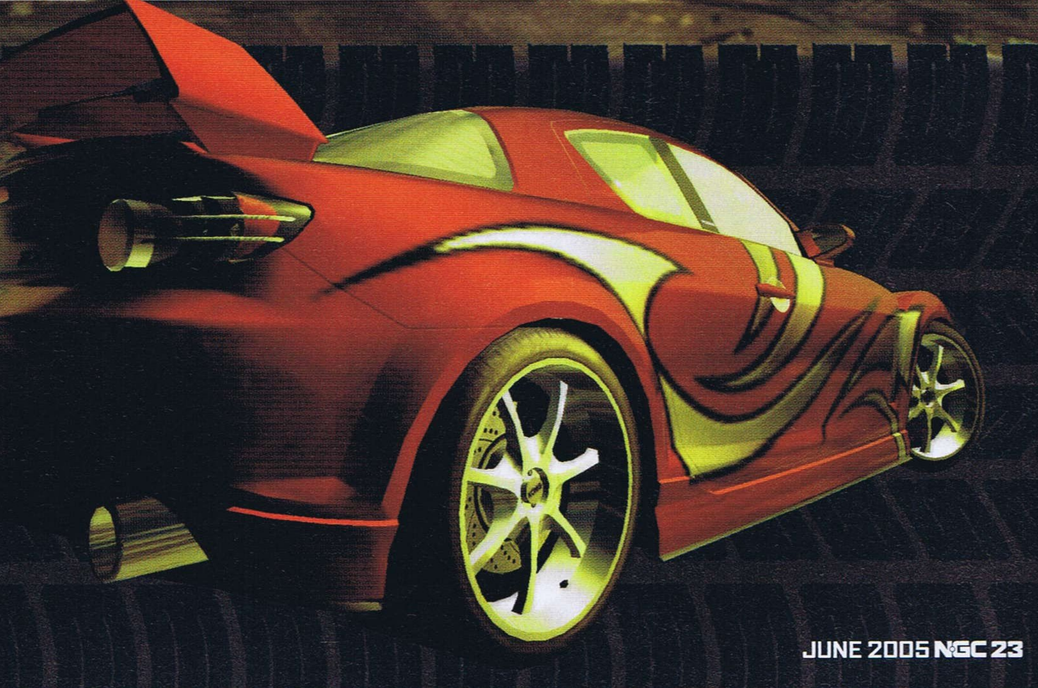




Drag racing is part of the package and will even be playable with four rivals over WiFi.

least the vital question of the frame rate. After all, the stuttering screens of both *Undergrounds* pretty much ruined the rapid racing experience that was originally intended for them. Although Larry has ventured a positive commitment to making *NFS:MW* more than just a simple port, saying "We will look to optimise the software to generate the best results from each unique system."

If that problem is solved by the time of the game's November release (just in time for Christmas), then, combined with both *Burnout 4* and *Midnight Club: DUB* bypassing Gamecube, the road is clear for *Most Wanted* to become the machine's most thrilling, frantic and desirable racer, but only if justice is done.







# PREVIEWS

## SIMPLY MARVEL-LOUS

Radical Entertainment have gone back to Marvel comics for *Ultimate Destruction* and commissioned *Ultimate's* artist Bryan Hitch to come up with a new Hulk model for the game, making him meaner than ever.

## THE KNOWLEDGE

- Completely new action game.
- Not based on the film.
- 140 different Hulk moves.
- Set in a huge city and the desert Badlands.
- Use anything as your weapon.

## FACTFILE

**Who's making it?**
Radical Entertainment

**What have they done before?**
**Hulk**
**(NGC/82, 65%)**
A basic, if surprisingly slick fighting game.



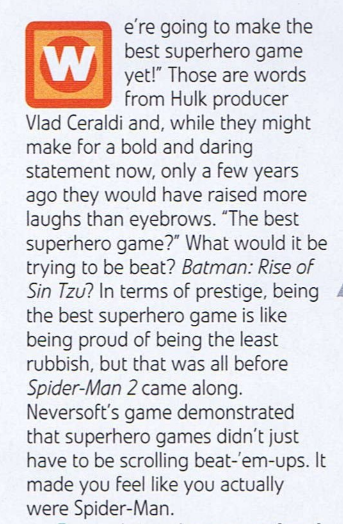
△ **Only creatures and robots several hundred times bigger than Hulk make worthwhile bosses.**





# THE INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION

## **You're really,** really going to like him when he's angry.



"We're going to make the best superhero game yet!" Those are words from Hulk producer Vlad Ceraldi and, while they might make for a bold and daring statement now, only a few years ago they would have raised more laughs than eyebrows. "The best superhero game?" What would it be trying to be beat? *Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu*? In terms of prestige, being the best superhero game is like being proud of being the least rubbish, but that was all before *Spider-Man 2* came along. Neversoft's game demonstrated that superhero games didn't just have to be scrolling beat-'em-ups. It made you feel like you actually were Spider-Man.

From what we've seen so far of *The Incredible Hulk*, Vlad Ceraldi really has the trousers to go with his reckless talk.

While Spider-Man swings, the Hulk smashes. *The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction* is all about smashing everything and anything. If it moves, it can be smashed and if it doesn't move, you can make it move and then smash it. This might sound brainless but developers Radical Entertainment have turned a big green man with a temper into a thing of beauty.

> **"THE INCREDIBLE HULK ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION IS ALL ABOUT SMASHING"**

For starters they've created a huge sprawling city full of buildings, shops, traffic and hustle and bustle. Then they've modelled everything in the city in such a way that it can be bent, battered and torn apart. You can crumple cars, lob buses, punch holes in walls, crater pavements, swat lamp posts, flick bad guys for miles – it's pure unadulterated carnage. But it gets better as this isn't just a city that passively takes a beating – it responds!

As soon as Hulk gets punchy, military strike teams, tanks and gunships show up, which means it's time to get creative. Basically in this game 'the world is your weapon'. Radical Entertainment boast that 95% of the environment is destructible and once it is destroyed, it can be used to destroy more stuff. Hulk Smash a truck and use it as

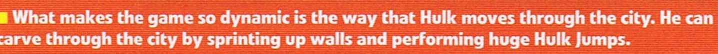


## HULK FLY!



One of the failings of the first *Hulk* game was that it didn't exploit the Hulk's phenomenal jumping power. He's a big man, but in the comics he can leap several miles in one bound.





■ What makes the game so dynamic is the way that Hulk moves through the city. He can carve through the city by sprinting up walls and performing huge Hulk Jumps.



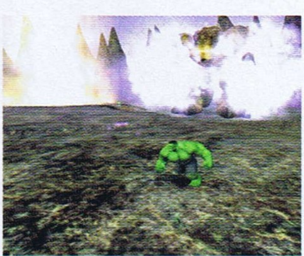




△ The city's strike teams don't mess around and come equipped with tanks and helicopter gunships, but this just gives Hulk more things to play with.



△ Don't worry, he's not retreating, he's just leading them on.



△ So far the Abomination is the only confirmed boss in the game.



△ How to defeat a 100-foot killer robot – just punch it in the shins.

## HULK MOVE!



■ One of the things that makes the game stand out is the amount of ways things can be destroyed or used as a weapon. You start off with 70 different moves, which is generous enough, but then there's 80 more to be unlocked by collecting Smash points.

a shield, a street lamp as a cosh, a tanker as a boomerang and, best of all, use a bus as a surfboard! Oh yes, we get to see the jolly green giant hanging ten through rush hour traffic.

What's brilliant about all these moves is that they're all incredibly easy to do, so they can be chained together as combos, leading to a world of pain waiting to be dealt.

It looks incredible thanks to some brilliant damage effects, sounds incredible due to a dynamic score, but most importantly it's incredibly daft. Where else can you use a burger shop sign as a bowling ball? This may be about destruction but it's done with a real sense of fun.

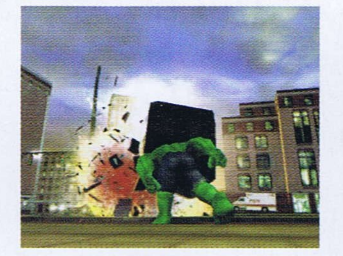
Radical Entertainment were responsible for the original *Hulk* game, but they have learnt a few lessons since then and, just as importantly, don't have to concern themselves with a movie release. Now they've got Marvel scribe Paul Jenkins creating the plot and a new Hulk character design making the whole experience feel more faithful to the comics.

This also means that there's no playable Bruce Banner, which is great as everybody likes the Hulk when he's angry, but nobody likes him when he's Bruce Banner. So no puzzles, no stealth sections just huge boss battles (six in total, with the Abomination already cast) and


△ The best way for Hulk to defeat opponents much bigger than him is to clamber on top and clobber them.


△ The game has a Free mode, which allows Hulk to just cut loose.





copious amounts of destruction. Oh and mini-games such as Hulk Golf – the Hulk, in the desert with a huge ball and a steel girder as a club.

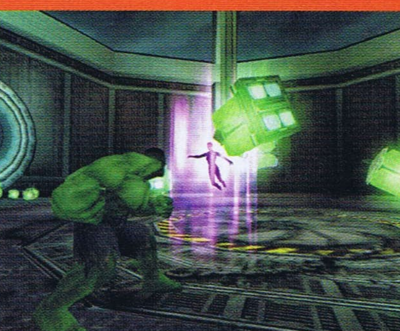
The version of the game that we played seemed solid and complete. Bounding around the city causing trouble was a complete joy. It's so much fun Radical Entertainment included a Free mode, where you can dip into the game and smash a few things.

The one thing yet to be decided is just how much damage you can do to the public. At the moment they can't be picked up and chucked around, but there's bound to be some collateral damage when you're swinging buses through the air and using pylons as spears. The problem is that the Hulk has been known to smash a few innocent by-standers in the comics, but, wary of how this might effect the games rating and reception, Radical are still in the depths of discussion about where they should set the Hulk's moral compass.

> "THE RIGHT BLEND OF COMIC BOOK AUTHORITY, ACTION AND KNOWING HUMOUR"

*The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction* is shaping up to rival *Spider-Man 2*; it has the right blend of comic book authority, action and humour. Behind all the devastation is some very sophisticated programming. The spin-off game seemed to be every superhero's nemesis, but, thanks to the kind of faith in the original material and the smart thinking that's being demonstrated by Radical, this is all changing. Finally being the 'best superhero game' is much, much more than just being the best of a bad bunch.

## HULK PLOT!


■ Radical Entertainment are being quite coy about the plot of the game as they are holding some surprises back for this year's E3. What we do know is that the game is set in two areas – the city and the desert Badlands.


■ As for characters, Abomination will make an appearance, as will Doc Samson and General Ross. Bruce Banner will appear in the cutscenes but won't be playable in the game – this is all about Hulk.

## NGC VERDICT

UK AUGUST | US AUGUST | JAPAN AUGUST



There's not much subtlety in *Ultimate Destruction*, but that doesn't mean it's dumb. None of the destruction seems brainless; it has been cunningly put together and, as there are so many moves, it never gets dull. What brings the game to life is Hulk's ability to hurtle through the air – it turns what could have just been a 3D rampage into something potentially special.

### ANTICIPATION RATING



## AXIS TO GRIND

While the only script you would normally associate with *Medal Of Honor* is the one controlling the AI, the man who co-wrote the screenplay for Apocalypse Now, John Millius has been drafted in to add depth to the pre-battle drama and dialogue.



### THE KNOWLEDGE

- 12 missions set across four campaigns, from France to North Africa, Russia and Belgium.
- 50 soldiers on screen at once.
- Squad-based combat.
- Four-player split-screen combat across 16 multiplayer maps.
- John Milius, the screenwriter behind Apocalypse Now and Conan The Barbarian, provides the script.



△ The enemy are meant to have a dramatically revised AI, but at the moment they still seem to border on the suicidal.

### FACTFILE

**Who's making it?**
EA

**What have they done before?**
**Medal of Honor: Rising Sun (NGC/75 74%)**
Predictable, suicidal enemies and linear levels let down the first on-rails shooter.



# MEDAL OF HONOR EUROPEAN ASSAULT

UPDATE

## **EA's brand of brothers** throws away the script but keeps the same screenplay.

*European Assault*'s four campaigns revolve around turning points in WW2: the commando raid on St Nazier, El Alamein, Stalingrad and the Battle of the Bulge.

But the decisive moment for *this* game actually came during the very first level of *MOH: Frontline*.

When the player spluttered in a sea of tracers and plunged into the cold North Atlantic in a desperate struggle to make it up Utah beach, the chaotic, sprawling battle elicited the kind of emotion and empathy from the player rarely seen in any software. It also made the rest of *Frontline* and its Far East follow-up feel obsolete.

Because instead of launching a revolution, the beach landing highlighted how all of the later levels squashed any feeling of freedom and punctured the perception of being part of a greater war effort. Instead of becoming open, the invisible walls rolled in and the emotional rollercoaster once again became a plodding, script-driven solo-shooter.

From our latest play of *Medal of Honor*, we can tell you that while it doesn't look like the game to take *MOH* in a radically new realistic direction, it does combine the traditional virtues of the series – cataclysmic carnage, epic events and dramatic set-pieces – with a new squad system and a 360 degree battlefield that advances the series towards the promise of D-Day. So out go the 'on-rails' shooting sections and the tired 'disguise' levels, and in marches a grander level of warfare.

Across most of the 12 levels, open locations with open-ended secondary and tertiary objectives have been created, allowing you to follow different routes across the dry valleys of North Africa or the villages of the Ardenne. And with the enemy finally able to exist off screen and beyond your vision, German soldiers can out-flank you or be picked off without the game planning and placing every sniper shot, ambush and enemy movement.

> "EUROPEAN ASSAULT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THE GAME TO TAKE MOH IN A NEW, REALISTIC DIRECTION"

What these extra soldiers do show is *European Assault*'s ability to pack the levels with frantic friends and foes. With up to 50 German and Allied troops scattered across a single screen, the perception of an ongoing struggle against Nazism once again feels

## A GLAND DON'T COME FOR FREE

*It's kill or be killed. Then once you've killed, kill some more.*

### WEAK BECOME HEROES

*Heroic actions are what you need to fill your Adrenaline bar. Like shooting a German in the back of the head when he didn't even know you existed. Healing your squad mates, or going hand-to-hand with a Nazi and landing your rifle butt right between the eyes will help – a stiff upper lip helps too.*







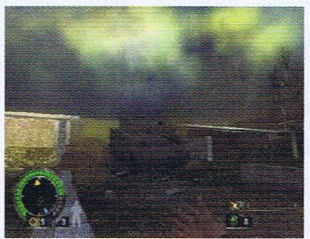
### BULLISH TIME

*Once the bar is full, the borders of the screen turn red, time slows to a crawl and the enemy become powerless. With unlimited ammo and invincibility, you are able to turn the tide of the war single handedly, usually by rushing straight into the middle of the firefight and picking off the surprised looking Wehrmacht.*

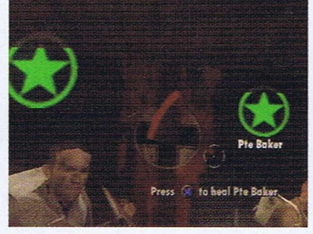
### COME ON DOWN

*Your head is somewhat tender after an Adrenaline rush. Suddenly after being all-conquering, you are left stood in open ground with nothing more to protect you and no way to deflect the bullets. It makes knowing when the effect is going to wear off almost as important as knowing when you should use it.*





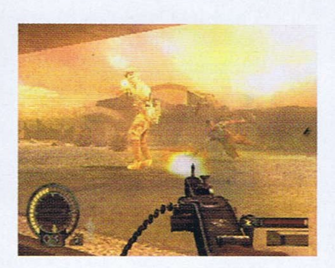
△ **Only in *MOH* can you run faster than a tank can turn and shoot.**



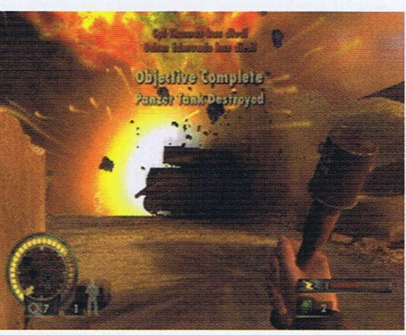

△ **The OSS was formed six months after the game starts. Whoops.**















credible, even if the GI's headless scampering hints that these mass battles are more about special effects than military effectiveness.

The same could be said about the new squad system, because while other games weigh themselves down with complex command systems, your group of grunts can be sent ahead, defend themselves and even heal each other. But don't be fooled, just because your team actually have names and health-bars, their death only means you'll receive a slightly less shiny medal. The fact that you don't have much connection to your squad will only make your life easier, because it doesn't really matter if they die.

If you can preserve the platoon, heroically make a headshot or share your supplies, you are rewarded with a moment of invulnerability called Adrenaline. In this red-tinted (and slightly jarring world) your warrior can spray his infinite ammo at the slowed down enemy without fear of taking a hit, for a few seconds of so.

While Adrenaline is meant to represent the moment when an ordinary soldier commits an act of selfless bravery, it really shows that *European Assault* remains proudly aimed the heart, not the head. Even the hugely improved environments are populated with floating weapon icons and the ranks of Wehrmacht still die rag-doll deaths thanks to the Havok engine. There is still a script at work underpinning things, but you can at least expect a few ad-libs in the mix.

From the opening voice-over to the flag-waving talk, this is unashamedly a war of fireworks and symphonic sweeps, not mud and marching but perhaps this fusion of patriotism, polish and openness could also be a turning point for the series. We will be reviewing this one in next month's issue.

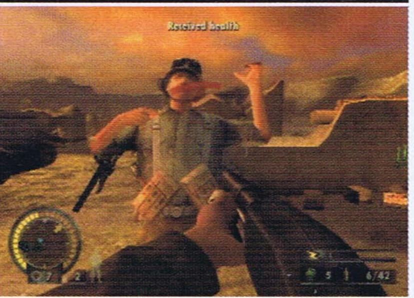
## OBJECTION OVERRULED



**Each one of the 12 levels has a primary objective that will allow you to complete the mission and scamper onto the next scrap. But each one of the battles also has a number of secondary tasks that are added to your list while the war rages and completing these jobs will help your rating. But there are also a third set of tasks hidden in each level, which will reveal maps of later levels, secret documents and extra details about the plot.**

## NGC VERDICT



***European Assault* is worthy of attention because gamers comments and complaints have been taken to heart. The engine, battlefields and new paths make the game livelier without changing the action. The squad-system might be a little bit of a dead-end, but the open battlefields free the game and add longevity and a more organic experience.**

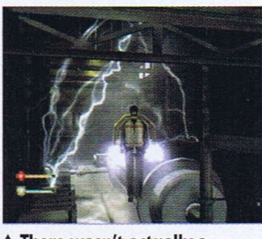
### ANTICIPATION RATING



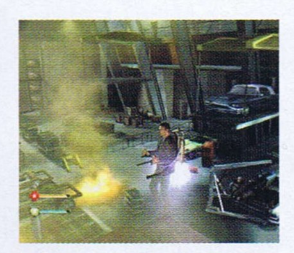
## LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Among the locations you'll be visiting in *From Russia With Love* are Zurich, London, Istanbul, Belgrade and you can even expect a brief stint on the Orient Express.





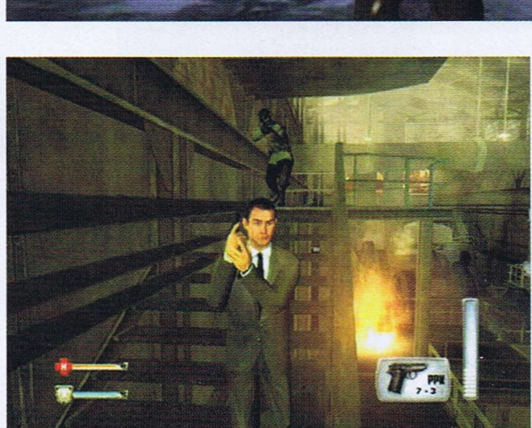
There wasn't actually a jet-pack in the film, you know.



Apparently, these cars in the background can be driven.

## THE KNOWLEDGE

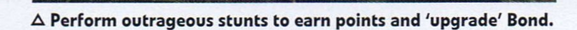
- Features Sean Connery's voice and good looks.
- Dozens of licensed vehicles including the Aston Martin DB5.
- Buy upgrades and equipment to customise your character.



Perform outrageous stunts to earn points and 'upgrade' Bond.



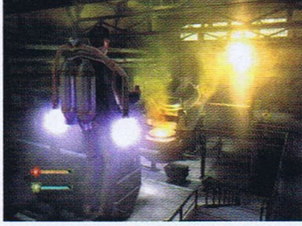
The environments are huge – but will there be much freedom?



## FACTFILE

**Who's making it?**
EA

**What have they done before?**
James Bond 007: Everything Or Nothing
**(NGC/91 68%)**
*Barely above average first person shooter.*



The steel works are visually very impressive, as you can see.

# FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

## Go back in time for EA's most authentic James Bond game yet



Forget about the disappointing (and frankly rubbish) *Rogue Agent*; EA's latest foray into the world of James Bond could actually be *good*. Based around the 1963 film of the same name, *From Russia With Love* pits a Sean Connery-shaped Bond against the evil organisation, S.P.E.C.T.R.E. (that's the Special Executive for Counterintelligence, Terrorism, Revenge and Extortion) and promises to be the most authentic 007 game yet.

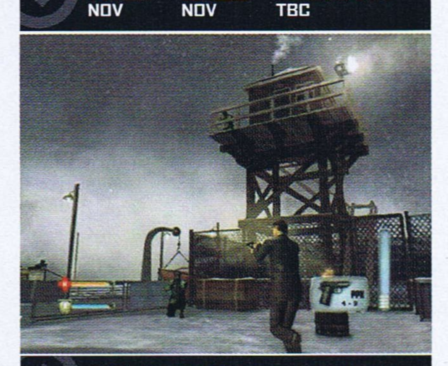
New features include the ability to upgrade and customise Bond's stats (strength, accuracy etc.), a new Focus mode (bullet time, basically) and, more dramatically, you can now enter and exit vehicles at will. How heavily this will feature remains to be seen, but hopping in and out of an Aston Martin DB5 while shooting at goons sounds more interesting than simply bounding around on foot.

Some dramatic licence has been taken with the game's gadgets and weapons (the actual film only featured one gadget – a suitcase with a rifle in it), so you can expect all manner of clever (and deadly) tools to play with, including a serum gun that turns enemies against each other and, as you've probably already seen in the screenshots, a jet-pack (from the film Thunderball).

We have also learned that Sean Connery himself will be recording dialogue for the game and, what with the lack of a film this year, the game could be an explosive and exciting alternative for fans of the James Bond series.

## NGC VERDICT

UK NOV | US NOV | JAPAN TBC



This is the first 007 game to stray away from the modern, Brosnan Bond and although it sticks closely to the film, things are still kept varied and exciting by tweaking existing set-pieces to make them more suited to a videogame – the brief London scene in the film is replaced by an epic jet-pack battle above Big Ben, for example.

### ANTICIPATION RATING















FULL EPISODES OF SONIC-X & TOTALLY SPIES!

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# FIRE EMBLEM SOUEN NO KISEKI

**What do you mean you've never heard of it?!** Let us introduce you…




△ **Player movement is exactly the same as it is in *Advance Wars*. Be mindful of where your troops are standing at the end of a turn, so they're not vunerable.**

# WHAT IS FIRE EMBLEM?

## Getting started…

We'd wager that, while most of you may have *heard* about *Fire Emblem*, the closest most people have come to actually *playing* it is controlling Marth and Roy in *Smash Bros Melée*. Which is hardly surprising to be fair, as *Fire Emblem* on GBA is the only game in the long-running series ever to make it out over here. Still, the series has a huge following in the US and Japan, and if you asked anyone who's played any instalment in the series, you'll be hard pushed to find anyone who isn't willing to sing its praises. So what's all the fuss about then?




△ **Bridges offer an excellent opportunity to bottleneck opponents into your line of fire.**

# THE BASICS

**Getting to grips with your** band of freedom fighters…



*Fire Emblem is a strategy RPG (SRPG). The game is divided up into a series of skirmishes against opposing armies across a number of different locations – each of which is viewed from above.*

*The game's battlefields are divided into a simple grid. Each square of the grid, depending on what kind of terrain it is, effects a unit's movement speed, accuracy and, in some cases, range.*

*Units take it in turns to move. When it's your turn, you'll be shown the radius in which a character can travel, as well as an arrow indicating the path the character will take to reach the chosen destination.*



*Once a character is within range of an enemy unit, you can attack. Here the view zooms in for a more intimate view of the action, giving you details about how much damage you've inflicted or how much you've taken.*




*Depending on the objective – defeating an enemy commander (or simply obliterating their entire army) will see you emerge victorious – claiming money, weapons, items and that all important EXP.*

# CHARACTER BUILDING

**The fundamentals of the game are very similar to Intelligent Systems' other turn based strategy game *Advance Wars*** – especially where unit movement is concerned – but there are a number of crucial differences that make *Emblem* unique.



*There are less in the way of different units to choose from but they're nowhere near as expendable. Each unit is a character, each with their own back story, specific skills and, more importantly, can be nurtured by gaining EXP and levelling them up like in an RPG.*

*In what seems like a cruel touch, any characters that are defeated in battle effectively 'die'. Once they've fallen, they can't be used again – so you're much less inclined to just throw them mindlessly into the thick of battle. In this respect you grow much more attached to your team.*




*Maps are also more involving, requiring a thorough exploration of battlefields. Units can enter buildings for example, and talk to the inhabitants, sometimes getting money or items, and in some cases giving you the opportunity to meet and recruit new members for your team.*

# RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

## **A quick crash course** in weapons mastery…

As in all strategy games, the driving force behind the tactics revolves around the old scissors, paper, stone system, where specific weapons or units have an advantage and disadvantage against other units. The most basic of these systems is as follows…

### SWORDS

The most basic of all weapons, they range from powerful, heavy two-handed affairs to lightweight rapiers. Their versatility and ease of use makes them the instrument of choice against the heavier, more unwieldy axes. You'll often find that swordsmen and women have superior movement capability and, in some cases, have a higher chance of hitting twice in one turn.

### AXES

What they lack in subtlety, they make up for in brute strength. Axes are so powerful that they prove very useful against the sturdier, lance-wielding units. There are a number of variations on the axe, some of which can be thrown – opening up possibilities for ranged attacks. They are also useful for cutting down trees, making bridges or even smashing through walls.

### LANCES

Usually carried by knights on horseback or footsoldiers, these are a swordsman's worst nightmare. The extended reach and power of the lance means that the bearer is very difficult to get close to and hit. If you pit a sword against a lance, chances are you'll miss completely. Lances can also be used as javelins for ranged attacks, while tougher variations can be used to pierce heavy armour.




# HORSE PLAY

## **Four legs good,** two legs bad.

The three weapon system isn't as restrictive as it sounds. Some units, like knights, have the ability to wield multiple weapons. Knights on horseback are capable of using lances, swords, javelins and sometimes axes. They also have a far greater movement range than other units, making them adept at nipping in and out of the danger at a moments notice. The pay off is that they rarely excel in any one particular area and are practically useless in mountainous terrain.



# MIGHT IN MAGIC

## When two feet of raw steel just isn't enough…

There have been, traditionally speaking, two main kinds of magic user in *Fire Emblem* – Light and Dark mages. Light mages use staffs which they use to heal any nearby units. They are an essential part of any fighting force, especially when you consider that any dead units remain dead for the duration of the game. Unfortunately though, they possess no attacking skills whatsoever. Dark mages specialise in attacking arts – you know the sort, fire, water, wind, lightning and so forth, all of which are highly effective against melée units. The downside is that they're extraordinarily weak defensively – only able to take one or two hits at the most before they die. Suffice to say that they should be heavily guarded then, and shouldn't placed on the frontline.

# ARCH ENEMIES

## Masters of long range attacks and a right royal pain in the ass…

As useful as they are bothersome. Archers have a unique inability to attack any adjacent enemies. They do, however, boast good attacking range, and can even launch arrows over walls – giving them a very handy tactical advantage, particularly in built-up areas. While their arrows aren't particularly powerful, they're very effective against winged creatures and can usually travel fair distances in one turn. The downside to all this though, is that their overall defence is, like the Mages, very poor indeed.

# TAKE TO THE SKIES

## Wielding the winged warriors.

One of the more useful units in the game are the Pegasus Knights and other flight-enabled characters. Unlike the others, these units don't have any restrictions on their movement – boasting a huge travelling range. They're particularly useful for rescuing any characters that are near to death, but out of range of a Light Mage and are great for getting to units that may be protected by mountain areas and the like. Pegasus Knights are also the only unit type that have a high resistance to magical attacks – making them very effective against troublesome Dark Mages. The only downside to these is that a single arrow shot from an archer can pretty much finish them off.

# SECONDARY SKILLS

## Beyond weaponry...

While most characters have similar basic functions – like movement, attack, wait and so forth – some have more unique, specialised abilities to bring to the table. Thieves for example, can pick locks on doors and chests to help find hidden goodies, while other specialised units, although often unable to attack, can boost the morale of individual characters, allowing them to take one more turn per battle phase or boost strength for a short time. One new pair of characters to the series – Mordy and Rethe – have the ability to turn into cats no doubt improving movement and attacking power when they do so.

This time these unique skills have been expanded. New to the series is Ambush – a means of getting a pre-emptive strike on the opposing force. Rage on the other hand will not only double your attack power, but will also guarantee a powerful counter attack when a unit falls below half their HP. The most interesting new skill is Taunt. This will goad an enemy into attacking the taunting unit – which is a very handy ability when it comes to drawing strong enemies away from a dangerously weak ally.

The overall skill system is now presented with far more depth than it was before. You can now choose the skills you want a character to learn, adding more versatility to the way you customise your character. These learned skills can then, at the player's request, be forgotten or traded in for a single character-specific skill.

# SETTING THE SCENE

**For the first time, *Fire Emblem* will get gorgeously animated cutscenes to help tell the story of the war you're engaged in. These will be combined with the more traditional (and always exceptionally well done) character dialogue skits and stills, to help flesh out the characters and their back-story.**




Δ Critical attacks will take down an enemy with a single hit. Nurture your characters to increase their critical potential.




Δ You can always turn the battle animations off.


Δ Hide in the forest there, and the enemy will have a real tough time hitting you…

# STRATEGY WITH A HEART

## **It's the tactical masterpiece** you never knew you wanted…



Ask anyone who attended last year's E3 about the Gamecube instalment of *Advance Wars* and the answer will be pretty much the same. "*Why* in *God's name* didn't they leave it as a proper strategy title?" You know, the same kind of strategy game that earned love and respect from anyone who played it? For those of us who found the change somewhat disappointing, *Fire Emblem* delivers a glimmer of hope – promising a turn-based game of serious, head-scratching tactical warfare.

Unlike *Advance Wars* then, *Emblem* is sticking to its roots. For anyone who's played the previous games, much has been kept the same to please the fans of the series. The same fonts for menus and dialogue, the same transitions between phases in battle, the same rousing main theme and, in some cases, the same sound effect samples. For once, we can honestly say that familiarity, at the expense of any radical changes or so-called innovations, is certainly welcome, however, that's certainly not to say developers Intelligent Systems (*Paper Mario, Wario Ware Touched* and *Mario Kart Super Circuit*) haven't introduced at least *some* new content.

> "EMBLEM IS ONE OF THE ONLY STRATEGY GAMES YOU'RE FORCED INTO CARING ABOUT"

The biggest change for *Fire Emblem* on Gamecube is obviously a visual one. Gone are the flat backgrounds and character sprites of its predecessors, and in their place are sharp-polygonal environments, buildings and characters. While purely cosmetic, it certainly gives the feeling that you're not as far removed from the action as you were before – something that's certainly true of the closer, zoomed-in views of the battlefield. Combined with the ability to change camera angles, there's a much stronger feeling that you're physically linked to the battle scene rather than just a casual observer.

Likewise, there's a much stronger sense that the battlefields are 'real', rather than the mountain ranges, woodland, fortresses and grassland that have been more symbolically depicted in the past. Still, it's fair to say that *Emblem* (aside from those astonishingly beautiful animated cutscenes) isn't the most attractive game in the world. In fact, it all looks a little rough and functional in places. But that's not really important to *Emblem*; to turn your nose up at the way it looks would be missing the point.

*Emblem* is one of the only strategy games where you're forced into genuinely caring about your team. They can make silly mistakes on the battlefield and die at a moments notice if you're not cautious enough. So you really have to think ahead and make decisions carefully if don't want to lose them. The same applies to offence. EXP, while awarded for pretty much any action you take on the field (regardless of how successful it is) is precious – with the vast majority of points earned through kills. It means that you need to be shrewd about which character distributes the killer blow. You have to cultivate each individual unit much more carefully than in other tactical games, where units are either expendable, or can be magically resurrected between skirmishes.

It's this level of attachment with your force that has made *Fire Emblem* such a firm favourite with its fans. The story is always well told, dialogue heavy maybe, but it's always engaging. Each and every character is serviced in terms of back story, distinctive personality and most importantly, usefulness in battle. It's definitely a real change from the faceless units that other strategy games have to offer.

Best of all, with *Fire Emblem* having already been released on GBA (and another soon to follow) the likelihood of a European release for Gamecube is looking increasingly likely.


Δ You'll need to learn to use terrain to your advantage. Learn when to stand your ground.



19 PACKED PAGES OF DS & GBA!

# NGC POCKET

FOR HANDHELD GAMERS

NINTENDO DS GAME BOY ADVANCE

## IN NGC POCKET THIS MONTH...



He's small, he's pink, and now he wants us to touch him…

# TOUCH! KIRBY

## PLUS!

- Pocket Fami – take your NES with you everywhere.
- Mario takes his never-ending party to the GBA.
- Invade the Disney universe in *Kingdom Hearts*.
- The best *PictoChat* animations of the month.




# WELCOME TO NGC POCKET...

What can I say about *Electroplankton*? It's very rare that you'll find a game that transcends all the traditional barriers found in gaming – like gender and control interface. It's so simple, so easy to grasp and, although there isn't actually any point to it all, it's completely universal in its appeal. Everyone who we've shown it to has been enthralled. Everyone we've shown it to hasn't been able to put it down. Everyone we've shown it to hasn't been able to stop smiling, or stop laughing when they try it. It's the kind of game that tickles you mentally. the kind of thing you never even *knew* you wanted until you actually try it. This is the sort of thing that Nintendo have been banging on about for the past year and it's the kind of innovative, magical experience that makes owning a DS so worthwhile. It's enough to convince anyone that Nintendo are *really* onto something. And it's not going to stop there.

*Nintendogs* is well and truly out there and that brings with it its own sense of wonder. If off-the-wall titles like these continue to be released over the next few months, we suspect that the DS love-in will continue right through the summer...

If by some miracle, you're still not convinced – wait until you get a load of *Touch! Kirby*.

**Geraint Rhys-Evans, Handyman**




**NGC POCKET, NGC** Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath. BA1 2BW
**Issue 1, January 2005**
**Editor:** The Welsh Wonder
**Contributors:** Hippy bum layabout boy, Red 'em up Kittsy, The Blue Flash, The Norfolk Turkey

# ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS

## The Gamecube masterpiece – now in the palm of your hand?





We recently caught wind of a rumour from Japanese retailers that the forthcoming *Zelda: Four Swords* on DS will actually be a direct port of the Gamecube version. This would make sense seeing as it's hardly the most visually intensive game on the planet and making a direct port (we'd imagine) would be relatively easy.

Also, with wireless communication negating the need for GBA-GC Link cables, and the second screen being very handy for those interior sections, it would mean that the game could finally reach the kind of audience it deserved, but never got.

However, just before we went to press, Aonuma, speaking in a recent interview, contradicts this by saying that, while the basic play mechanics will be the same, the overall concept will be different. Even more interesting though was the suggestion that it'll be another of DS' online games.

## DS GETS VIEWTIFUL

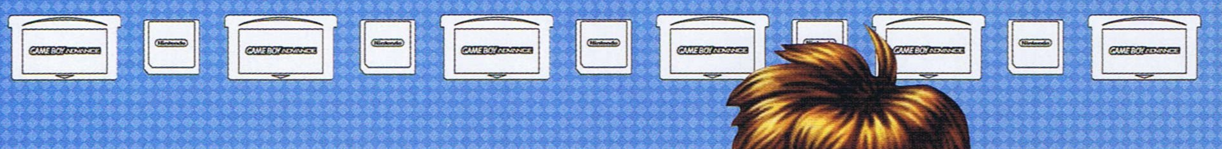




### Henshin-a-go-g- (Stop it! Stop it before I kill you - Ed)

Or rather *Scratch! Viewtiful Joe* as it's now called. It's been looming large on the DS release list for quite some time now – and being big fans of both Gamecube Joes, we've been looking forward to it with some enthusiasm. So it's reassuring to see that it's shaping up very well – at least insofar as it looks remarkably similar to the home console versions. Granted, some 'scaling down' is evident on the visual front, but then considering the hardware available, that's to be expected.

From what we can tell, the game has retained the same core mechanics that have made *Viewtiful Joe* so enjoyable, but the thing that *really* interests us at the moment is the whole 'Scratch!' part of the title. This alludes to a new VFX move called Power Split, which requires players to draw lines across the screen – presumably to help dish out all manner of high-powered ass-kickery. The game will also feature an all new character in the form of Joe's feisty sister, Jasmine.







# ELECTRIC BLUE

## New colour announced for DS in the US.

Another month, another colour (or should that be 'color'), this time for the US. It's called Electric Blue and will be released in the states in June. Funnily enough though – it bares more than a passing resemblance to the recently announced Limited Edition Pokémon DS in Japan. It's the same colour, only it features a PokéPark logo on the clamshell and a little Pikachu silhouette next to the screen. If you ask us, none of them are as nice as that beautiful, white Japanese DS. Now if only we could afford it…




# GUNSTAR SEQUEL

## Follow up to the Treasure classic imminent.

*Gunstar Heroes*, one of our favourite games ever, is set to get a sequel. Strange, you may think, considering that Treasure have always said they 'don't do sequels' – but then again, maybe it's not so strange when you consider that (rumour has it) it will be developed by Sega. Details are pretty sparse at the moment – other than it'll be called *Gunstar Super Heroes* and is in development for GBA rather than PSP or DS, and the dual weapon combo system from the original will remain intact.

# ADVANCE WARS SCREENSHOT BLITZ

Just as we went to press we took delivery of a shedload of *Advance Wars* shots. We thought you may like to see them before we go all out on them next month. They're pretty interesting to say the least. Check out the aerial battles and the new tank designs, for example.

# JOYTECH DS GIVEAWAY

## Win more DS stuff than you can carry.

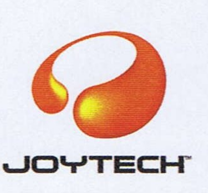
Courtesy of the generous people at Joytech, we have a load of DS-related prizes up for grabs. The first prize is a Nintendo DS (you know, one of those new-fangled, dual-screen videogames consoles) complete with a copy of the excellent *Wario Ware: Touched* and a rather nice Joytech Nintendo DS Tech Pack – which happens to included a carry case for your DS, stereo earphones, earphone adaptor for GBA SP, DS game cases, SP game cases and an in-car adaptor. We also have three more Joytech DS Tech Packs to give away to three lucky runners up (we do spoil you). All you have to do is answer the following question.

In this months NGC Pocket, we reviewed Nintendo's *Electroplankton*. We want to know, which plankton was described as sending out 'hypnotic and soothing washes of sound and colour'?

**a) Tracy**
**b) Lumiloop**
**c) Beatnes**

Answers on a postcard to The Joy of Techs DS Compo, NGC Magazine, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW or email your answer to ngc@futurenet.co.uk. The first entry out of the 'hat' wins the DS, *Wario Ware* and the peripherals, the next three get the peripherals.




JOYTECH

# NGC POCKET

HANDHELD NES ■ HANDHELD NES ■ HANDHELD NES

# POCKET FAMI

## Retro gaming on the go.

Peripherals specialists Blaze have brought Gametech's NES-compatible handheld, the Pocket Fami, to the UK. And for £55, you too could be playing retro classics on the go. On giant cartridges. It might cost at least five times what you'd expect to pay for a real NES console, but it has a built-in screen and it plays import games too. We played it to pieces (almost literally) in the process of creating this detailed breakdown of exactly what you get for your money…

### BUTTONS

As the NES only has two buttons, the upper ones here simply activate autofire – handy for shoot-'em-ups. What the buttons don't do is protrude enough to make it easy to press two at once, unless you have thumbs as wide as a fat man's big toe.

### CARTRIDGES

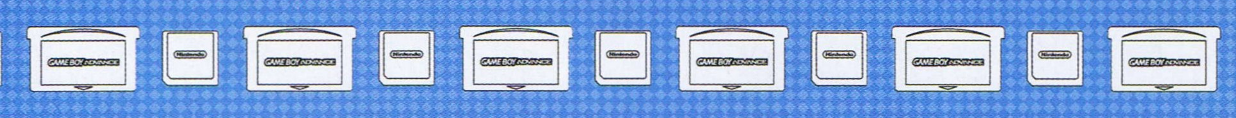
It accepts Japanese Famicom games, which are slightly smaller than N64 carts and don't stick out of the top too much. The machine comes with an adaptor for the huge European and US carts, which actually sit atop the slot when plugged in, thereby protruding a full 13cm and wobbling enough to cause a dodgy connection. Our copy of *Super Mario Bros 3* kept resetting if we breathed too heavily near it.



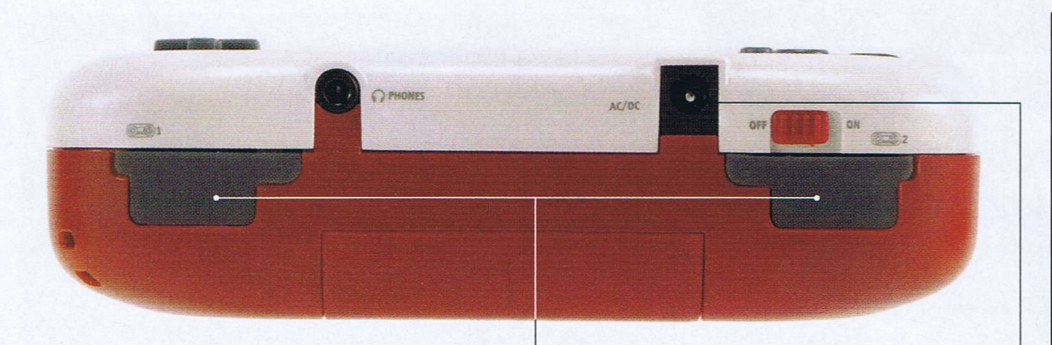



### D-PAD

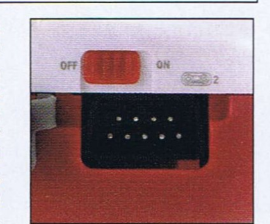
Very small and sticks up a bit too high on its circular rocker, making it difficult to select precise directions.





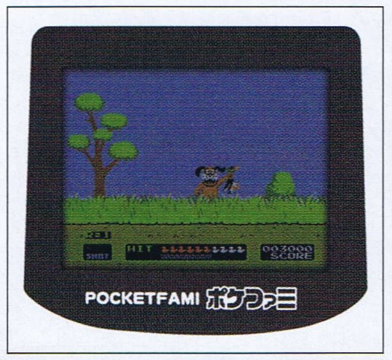
## CONTROLLER PORTS



If you don't fancy playing with the slightly awkward controls on the Pocket Fami's face, plug a real NES controller in the concealed port at the bottom of the machine. Plug in another one for two-player games, and make sure nobody manages to drag the Pocket Fami onto the floor while playing – it'll smash.

## POWER SOCKET

The machine takes three AA batteries, which last around two or three hours before the power indicator starts going red. Alternatively, feed a hefty 9V into the power socket, using a suitable AC adapter, and play for as long as you damn well like.




## FATNESS

Never mind the quality – feel the (42mm!) width. The prodigious girth of this beastie actually makes it far more comfortable to hold than newfangled slimline handhelds such as the GBA SP and DS.

• Picture shown (right) actual size

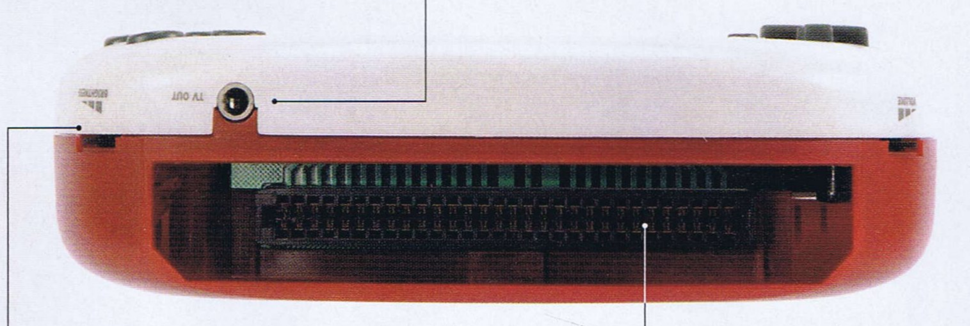


## SCREEN

Smaller than a GBA screen, and very fuzzy. It's the kind of thing you'd expect to find on a cheapo LCD TV from ten years ago, and is nowhere near the standard of, for want of a better word, 'professional' handheld systems.

## TV OUT

The Pocket Fami's saving grace. Hook up the supplied video and mono audio cable, and enjoy a decent quality picture on your TV. Add two NES controllers, wedge the Pocket Fami somewhere so the cartridge won't wobble and the machine won't get pulled onto the floor. Also you've got a passport to 8-bit Nintendo heaven – a console that plays all Japanese Famicom titles plus European and US NES games.



## BRIGHTNESS CONTROL

The little dial was wired up back to front on our test unit, so turning it down actually made the screen brighter. Turning it to about 80% gave the best results – any further and the screen only became darker again. Weird.



## CARTRIDGE SLOT

Pushing aside the dust flap gives a glimpse into the Pocket Fami's toxic-smelling guts, from whence wafts the aroma of carcinogenic chemicals and frazzled circuits. We spotted several interesting electrical components before the stink forced us to restore the dust flap to its natural state of closedness.



## PLAY IT

### What games should you play?

Considering most of the best NES titles have been rereleased several times, often with improved graphics (the *Mario Advance* titles for GBA) and loads of extra content (*Super Mario Bros Deluxe* for GBC), it's hard to pick any games you really must see in their native format. Even *Animal Crossing* comes with loads of downloadable NES classics to play on GBA – which has a far nicer screen than the Pocket Fami.

Your choice boils down to *Kid Icarus,* perennial nostalgia fave of large, beardy Americans, and a wide range of rock-hard Japanese shooters. Expect to pay no more than a few quid per cartridge at second hand games shops– a fair bit cheaper than the NES Classics series for GBA, and you get to play the games in their original screen resolution too.






## WIN IT

### Swap scribbles for Pocket Fami.

You can have our Pocket Fami! We're done with it now, and although the plastic tabs snapped off the cartridge adaptor and somebody's fingernail went straight through the brittle rubber cover of controller port two, it works every bit as well as it did when we got it. So we're giving it away to one lucky reader.

To be in with a chance of blagging this uniquely customised piece of retro tat, simply draw an answer to the following question – if this is a portable Famicom, what would a portable Gamecube look like? Sketch something imaginative and send it to Port-a-Cube, NGC Magazine, 30 Monmouth street, Bath BA1 2BW or email ngc@futurenet.co.uk. Our favourite sketch wins the Pocket Fami.




# GOLDENEYE ROGUE AGENT

**From:** EA **Out:** 1ST JULY

Granted, we were hardly the Gamecube version's biggest fans. In fact, it would be safe to say that it was a bit crap – but only because it was so simplistic, shallow and too repetitive compared to other first-person shooters. It did however, have a couple of things going for it. First and foremost it was relentlessly violent and about as subtle as a sledgehammer – which, in short doses, proved murderously satisfying. The multiplayer mode, although hardly in the same league as the N64 classic, was option-heavy, smooth and frantic enough to be enjoyable. Again, in small doses.

Which brings us to EA's DS version. Apparently it'll have a total of six missions (although we have no idea as to their length), each ending with a familiar boss from the Bond universe. There will also be some kind of training mode where you can earn upgrades for the game's weapons. Aside from that, we don't know much else – other than the fact that it'll have the same, daft, convoluted story about you (the MI6 agent-turned-bad-guy) and your golden eye. They must have thought long and hard about that one. *Sigh.*

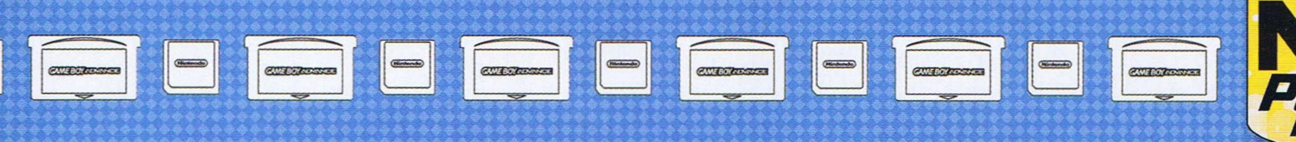
Six levels does seem kind of short, true – but it might be fair to say that its simplicity would better suited (or rather, a little more forgivable) on a handheld. We're inclined to think so at any rate – a short, sharp bout of mindless killing on the train on the way home from work does hold a certain… appeal. And considering that the only FPS alternative on DS at the moment is the *Hunters* demo – it could well fill the gap until Samus' full-length adventure graces the shelves.

And what about the multiplayer? We're not really going to turn our noses up at the prospect of some eight player wireless deathmatching to start with, and given that FPS controls have worked remarkably well on DS thus far, we'd put good money on this turning out to be an agreeable shooter.

△ Something about this scene reminds us of *Perfect Dark* – although it's a pretty safe bet that it's going to be some way off in terms of quality. Still, fingers crossed that it turns out at least half-decent, eh?

△ Dual-weapon wielding and the ability to punch people full in the face. Which is nice.

△ Anyone who dresses like that and wears his sunglasses indoors is clearly asking for it. Shame you can't see the purple bunny rabbit slippers just out of shot.





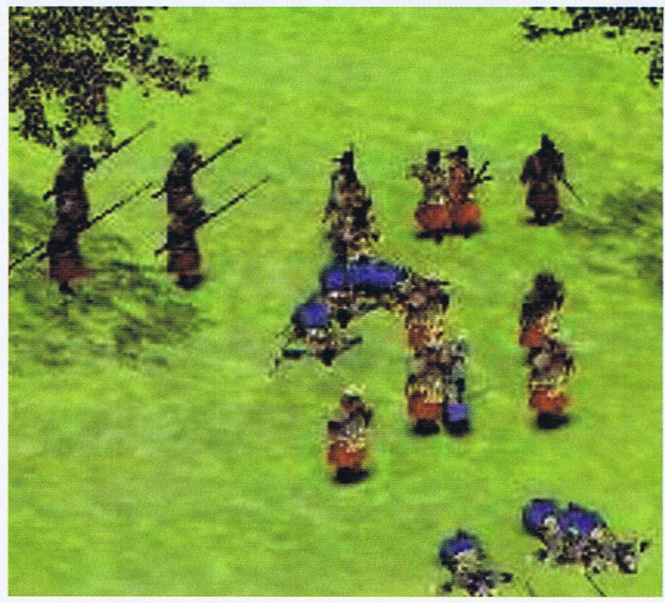
# SHOGUN WARRIOR THE LOST ARMY

**From:** NAMCO **Out:** OCTOBER

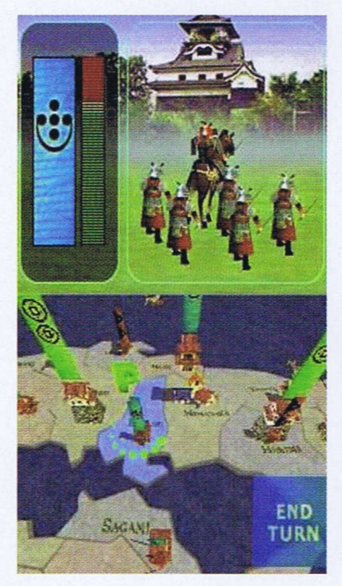
We like the look of this, mainly because it bares more than a passing resemblance to the excellent *Shogun: Total War* on PC – the precursor to the even *more* excellent *Rome* and *Medieval Total War*.

*Shogun Warriors: TLA* is basically a real-time strategy game. The ultimate goal is to unite the whole of feudal Japan under the one banner (yours). Which means manoeuvring your troops around a Risk-style map and invading enemy territory before dishing out some Samurai justice. Battle scenes take place on 3D battlefields across both screens, and you can command the different units at your disposal using the touch-screen. There are also a number of mini-games, like castle sieges, one-on-one duels and naval battles to add a bit of variety to the proceedings.

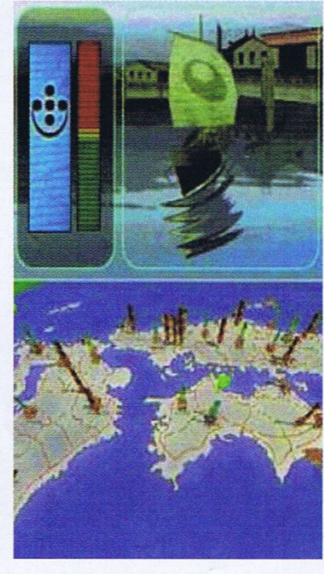
It's not just about out-and-out fighting, though. You'll also be able to use diplomacy to try and manipulate other factions in Japan. You can even hire ninjas to assassinate prominent figures in rival territories. It's still early days, but this could well turn out to be something of a treat – especially if the rumours of 16-player wireless battles turn out to be true…



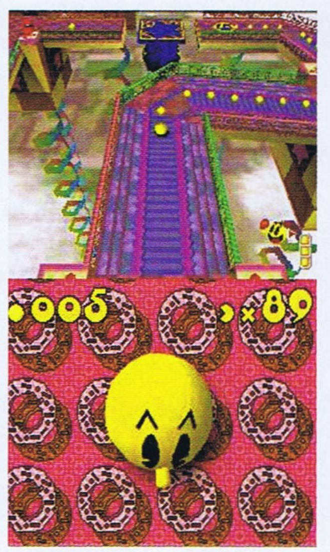
**△ The majority of the action will take place on battlefields like this – although there will be simpler elements like the overall management of your forces.**



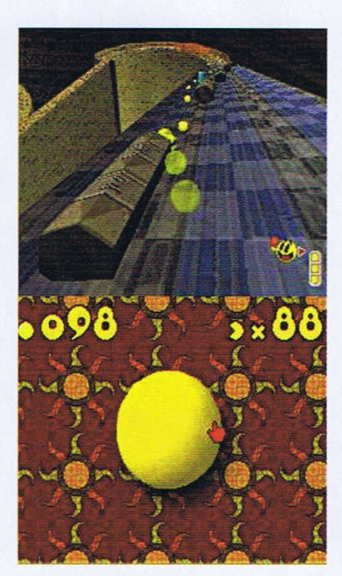

**△ Castle sieges make up one of the mini-games although, like this…**



**△ …naval-based section, we still don't understand how they work.**



**△ How he's supposed to roll with a nose like that is anyone's guess…**



**△ This course seems less maze-like and more speed-orientated.**

# PAC 'N' ROLL

**From:** NAMCO **Out:** AUGUST

It's good to see this one finally resurfacing after an enjoyable (if rather brief) showing at last year's E3. Unlike the self-animating marvel of *Pac-Pix*, it's a cross between the more traditional *Pac-Man* pursuit of gobbling pills and the Atari classic, *Marble Madness*… or maybe it will be more like *Super Monkey Ball*. Anyway…

The top screen shows the maze-like area that Pac Man has to navigate, while the bottom screen has a large trackball-style Pac-Man that you have to roll using the stylus. Naturally, there are certain complications to test your skills. The 3D mazes have moving platforms to negotiate, windy areas that threaten to blow Pac-Man frustratingly off course, and all manner of other level furniture like jump pads and speed strips.

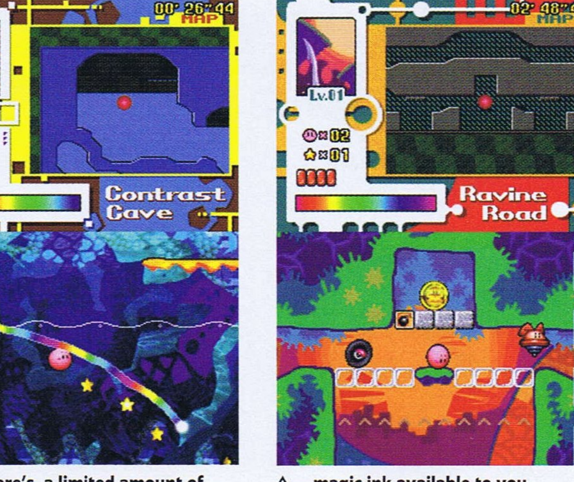
Pac-Man can also utilise a number of power-ups outside the usual power-pills. Armour will allow him to smash through walls, while one power-up will enable him to fly to previously inaccessible areas. As a bonus, Namco are also including the original arcade version – which can now be played by two people simultaneously.



**△ When we tried this at E3 last year, the touch-screen trackball system was surprisingly responsive and worked well for precision tasks and delicate rolling.**

# NGC POCKET

REVIEWS • REVIEWS • REVIEWS • REVIEWS




△ There's a limited amount of… △ …magic ink available to you.

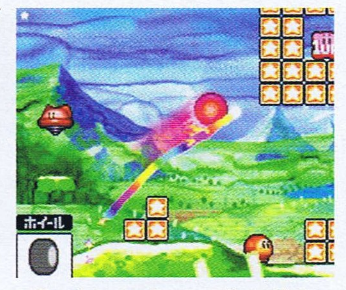


△ Drawing loops will help Kirby gain more speed and extra height.

# TOUCH! KIRBY



| **FROM:** NINTENDO | **PLAYERS:** 1 | **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO |
|---|---|---|
| **MICROPHONE:** NO | **OUT:** NOW (JAP) | **COST:** ¥5,400 (£25) |



△ The pink wheel power allows Kirby to power though levels at high speed.

## Like Sonic and NiGHTS, but with a camp pink ball…






From the mediocre *Amazing Mirror* and *Crystal Shards* to the utterly tedious *Air Ride*, we find it hard to show Kirby the same kind of affection some of you think he deserves. It's a shame because in amongst these forgettable outings, he has had some brief flashes of brilliance; the original *Dreamland* series for example, or the superbly innovative *Tilt 'n' Tumble*. It's a real pleasure then, to discover that *Touch!* is up there with the best of them – and, in its own way, proves to be his finest adventure yet.

The mechanics of the game are simple enough; Kirby is controlled via the touch-screen alone. Tap him and he'll perform a little spin dash, giving him a little momentum (this can also be used to attack). Once you've got him rolling, you use the stylus to draw rainbow-coloured conveyor belts underneath him, propelling him along even faster. These rainbows come from Kirby's store of magic ink – and you can only use so much at one time before you run out. It will recharge slowly while he's in the air, and faster when Kirby hits the ground. Strategic use of this ink is the key to success.

> **"IT HAS REPLAY VALUE, IT USES THE TOUCH AND DUAL SCREENS BRILLIANTLY"**

Once you've got to grips with that, your task is to guide the Kirbster to the goal at the end of three sub-levels that make up one overall stage. That's the easy bit, though. Were you to simply concentrate on steering him to a level's end, the game would only last you an evening – or maybe two at the very most.

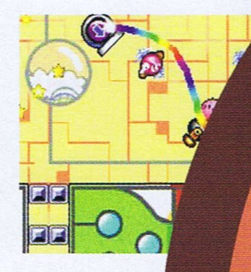
Of course, that's not all there is to it. It's not just about getting to the end, it's about exploration, mastering the subtle nuances of the simple

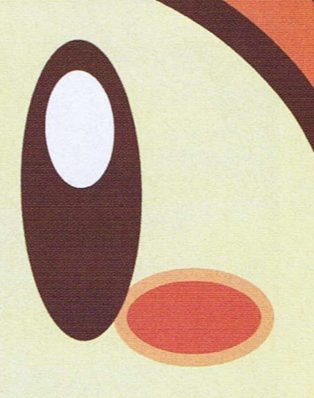
## NGC POCKET 5 STAR SCORING EXPLAINED

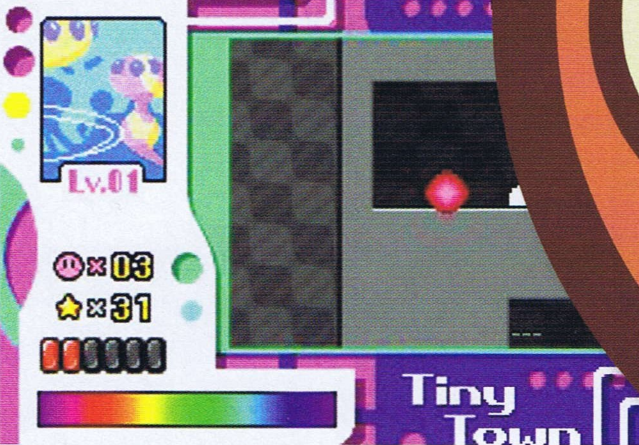
| Score | Meaning |
|---|---|
| 5 | Beyond shadow of a doubt, an essential purchase |
| 4 | Definitely recommended. |
| 3 | Okay, but not a disaster if you miss out. |
| 2 | Disappointing and a waste of good money. |
| 1 | The gaming equivalent of a venereal disease. |



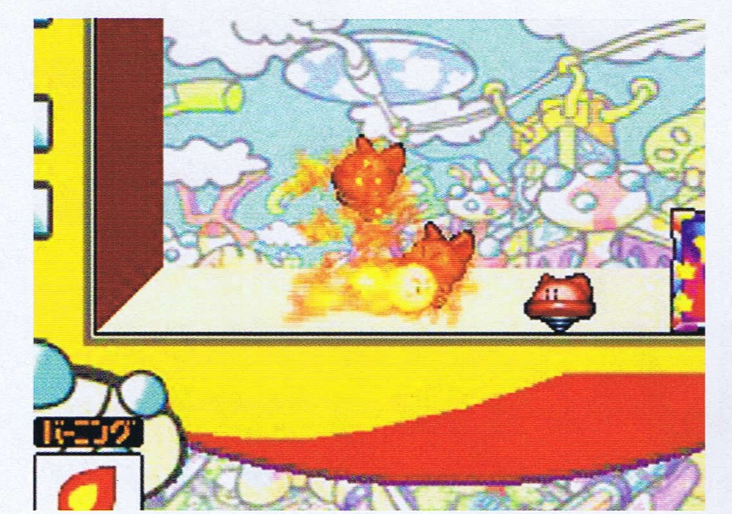
△ Stun enemies to steal their power.



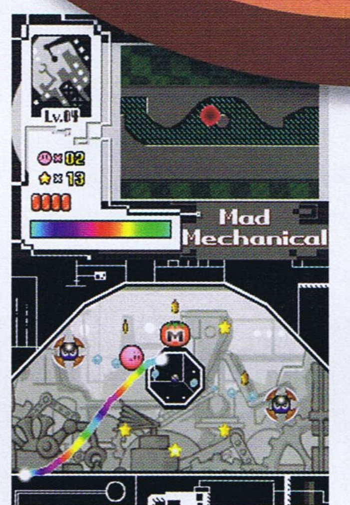





△ The map screen can be used for seeking out those last few medals you missed.



△ Power-ups like Kirby's flaming ability are essential for finding medals.




△ The good old health-giving tomato.

△ Clear boxes with your stylus.

control system and uncovering the wealth of extra goodies on offer.

Hidden in each stage are three medals. To seek these out you'll need to master Kirby's abilities. Draw a loop and it will propel Kirby faster. Little touches can be used to keep him airborne or make him change direction, and all manner of level furniture, like bouncers, cannons and so forth can be used to access hard to reach places.

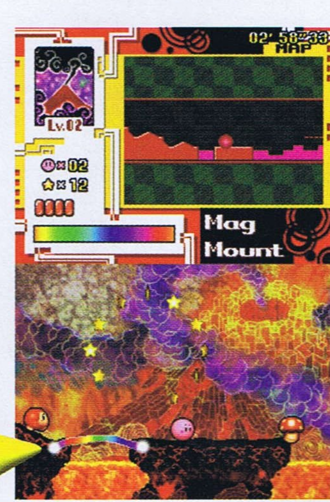
On top of this you also have his innate ability to absorb enemies' power ups, like a fiery dash, a bolt of lightning, or the ability to transform into a rock. All of these subtleties need to be employed skilfully to fully explore everything that the game has to offer.

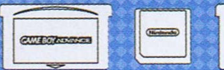
But there's more… complete a set of stages and you'll find a trio of mini-games awaiting you. There's a mine-cart style race against King Dede, a Simon Says-style high speed drawing challenge, and a game where you have to draw lines under Kirby to bounce him at block targets and enemies to climb ever upwards.

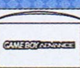
Each stage also has a series of trials, like a classic time-trial mode where you race to the end against the clock, and a very smart little challenge where you must reach a level's end using as little magic ink as possible. These all give up valuable medals, which can be spent in-game to unlock more characters, music and a host of other little extras. We never thought we'd say it but, in its own way, calling *Touch!* a near perfect companion for your DS isn't actually stretching the truth that far. It has replay value, it uses the touch and double screens brilliantly, it constantly plays with its own elegant control scheme (throwing in some genuinely surprising elements into the mix) and, as the icing on the cake, is not only impeccably presented throughout (the backgrounds and soundtrack are truly magnificent) but it also comes with a nice pink stylus. You can't argue with that.

**GERAINT EVANS**



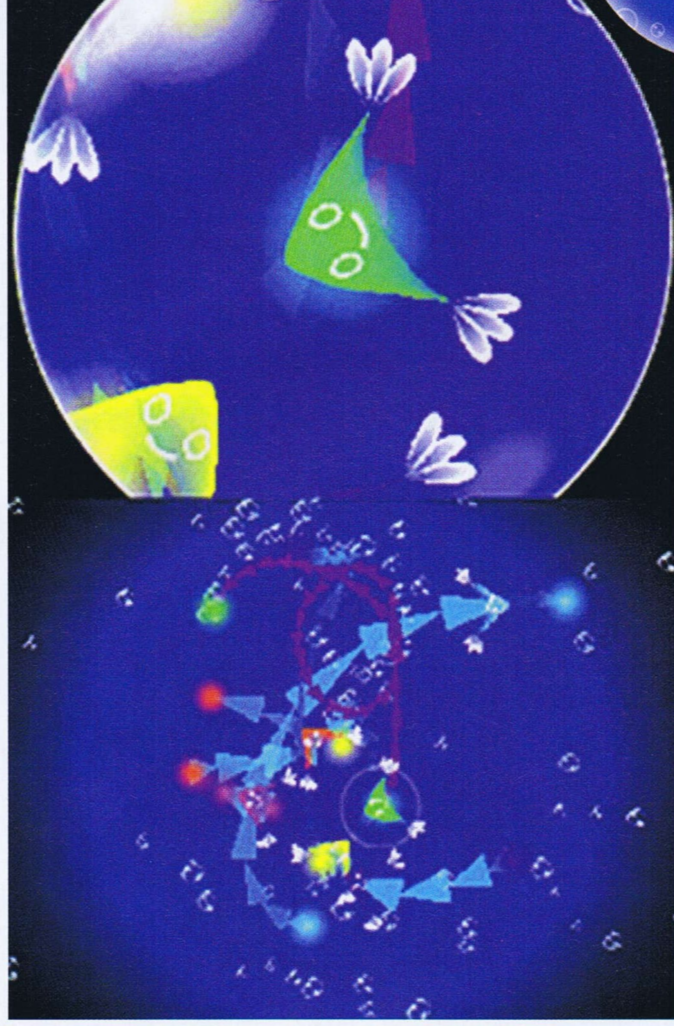



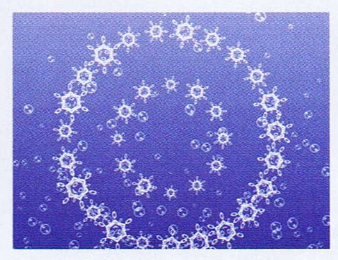








△ Draw lines across the touch-screen and the Tracy plankton will follow them, making noises as they go. It's quite tough to get anything tuneful out of them.


△ The plankton leap from the leaf on the left. You can discharge more by pressing Up on the D-pad.


△ These chime when you poke them.


△ Nanocarp will react to your voice.


△ The D-pad will send lines across the screen, activating the plankton.

# ELECTROPLANKTON

## 'Game' meets 'Art' in Nintendo's fishy funkulator…



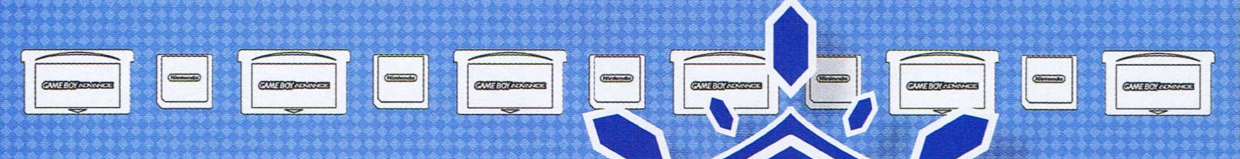
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **FROM:** NINTENDO | **PLAYERS:** 1 | **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO |
| **MICROPHONE:** YES | **OUT:** NOW (JAP) | **COST:** ¥5,370 (£26) |

It's a 'game' of quite astonishing beauty – and we use that term very lightly indeed, mainly because it's not really a game at all, definitely not in the traditional sense anyway. There aren't really any goals as such, no tasks that need to be completed and no guidance given to you in the way that you play. You're simply presented with ten, very distinctive little plankton types to fiddle with – each with its own set of behaviours and functions. Poking, prodding, stroking and even singing to them will yield varying results in the shapes they form, the colours they emit and the sounds they produce.

Take the Tracy plankton as an example. You poke a plankton with your stylus and draw a line across the touch-screen. When you remove your stylus from the screen, the plankton will follow the line to its end before repeating its way across the path you drew over and over. The sounds the plankton makes depends on the speed you drew the line, the area of the screen the line passes through (higher up the screen produces a higher pitch) and the length of the line. There are six Tracy plankton to manipulate, and once you've got them moving they'll play an outrageous cacophony of sound until you either prod them to stop, or experiment with them long enough to produce loops of sound that don't resemble a xylophone raked over a cheese-grater and start to vaguely resemble something called 'music'.

There are other varieties of plankton that are much more accessible to the uninitiated and are simpler to use. Lumiloop for example, gives you five little rings to rotate





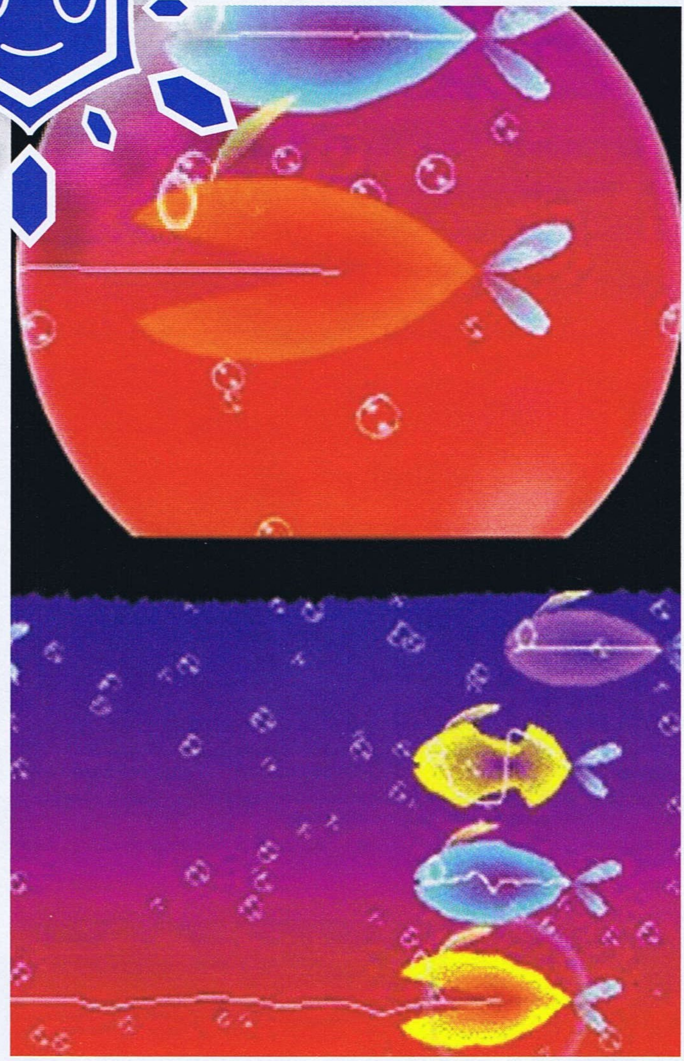




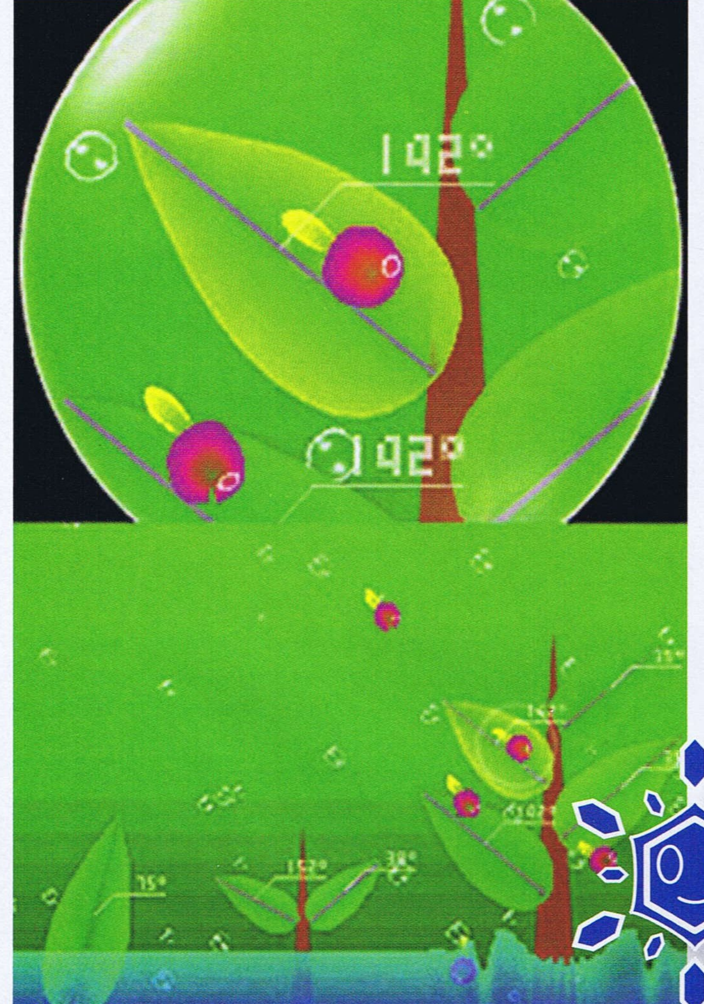

△ Give the sound-recording Volvoice to someone and watch them chuckle.



△ The Loomiloop are the most soothing of all the plankton.



△ Rec-Rec is one of the simpler plankton to get to grips with, looping up to four sounds that you can record via the mic. Excellent for songs about Paul's mum.



△ If you get these fish-like plankton to hit the leaves regularly enough (by changing their angle), you can make a flower bloom at the top of the plant.

△ If you sing into the mic, the Nanocarp will form different shapes.



△ You can also trigger them individually by tapping their bodies.

with the stylus – sending out hypnotic and soothing washes of sound and colour, while the more rhythmic Beatnes lets you loop old 8bit NES samples to a variety of rhythms by tapping on the segments of the plankton's body. Initially, you'll gravitate to these simpler, easy to understand plankton first. Rec-Rec, that allows you to record up to four sounds onto four fish-like plankton before looping them back to you, or Volvoice, which records your voice and plays it back through a variety of amusing filters.

It really is a very refreshing little title (as mentioned earlier, it can't really be called a game). It's a handful of simple but engaging concepts that are not only extremely compelling and therapeutic to experiment with, but are completely universal in their appeal. We haven't found anyone who hasn't been captivated by circling Lumiloop, who haven't giggled like children at their own Volvoice recordings, or been enchanted by the delicate chiming of their slowly-evolving Sun-Animalcule. In this respect, *Electroplankton* is an exceptional musical curiosity. It's completely open to individual interpretation, and, without wishing to sound like a tosser, it is closer to 'art' than 'game'. And the more you delve into it, and the better you understand the subtle nuances of each plankton, the better the final results you can achieve.

There are questions over how long it will hold your attention. If you can appreciate it for what it is, you'll carry it with your DS wherever you go – even if it's just to introduce it to like-minded friends. If you *don't* 'get it' and wonder what the hell it's supposed to do, then it'll be in and out of your DS within a week. As far as we're concerned though, despite it's lack of wireless functionality and the inability to save your finest works, it's one of the best pieces of DS software we've seen so far.

**GERAINT EVANS**

DUAL ★★★★
TOUCH ★★★★★
**4**

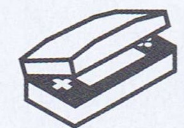



Tap your stylus over enemies to blast them with bum-eggs. Nice work.




Keep an eye on Mario on the top screen while drawing clouds below.

# YOSHI'S TOUCH & GO



**FROM:** NINTENDO | **MICROPHONE:** NO | **PLAYERS:** 1 | **OUT:** 5TH JUNE | **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO | **COST:** £30

## Short but sweet 2D platforming...

We know, we can already hear the complaints. There are only two levels. But those two levels are so good and so addictive you'll be playing *Yoshi's Touch & Go* for as long as you played *Tetris* on your first Game Boy.

It sounds like a strange comparison seeing as you waddle around lobbing bum-eggs at enemies and collecting coins, but with the aim being to get high scores rather than beat a boss, it has the same 'one-more-go' playability of the best puzzlers.

> "YOSHI'S TOUCH & GO IS ONE OF THE MOST ADDICTIVE DS GAMES"

Take Endless mode, which sees Yoshi walking on an endless journey that gets more hair-rippingly difficult as you pass each 1000 meters. It's so good you could play all the way from Lands End to John O' Groats – that is if the spiky bombs didn't get in your way and end your quest. Start again.

At first it seems so simple; draw clouds with your stylus to help the falling Baby Mario collect coins and avoid the enemies. Then, when you get to the bottom of the screen, Baby will land on Yoshi and you continue drawing clouds and grabbing stuff, only this time you can lob some eggs at the enemies.

Then, after you've got Yoshi to the end of the first level, it gets more complex. At first you may wonder why didn't you get the high score, but then on your second run, you spot the coins and Shy Guys you missed on the top screen. So you have to fire an egg up to the top screen to get enemies and coins with one blast. There are also coins floating underneath platforms, so you have to deflect eggs off the walls.

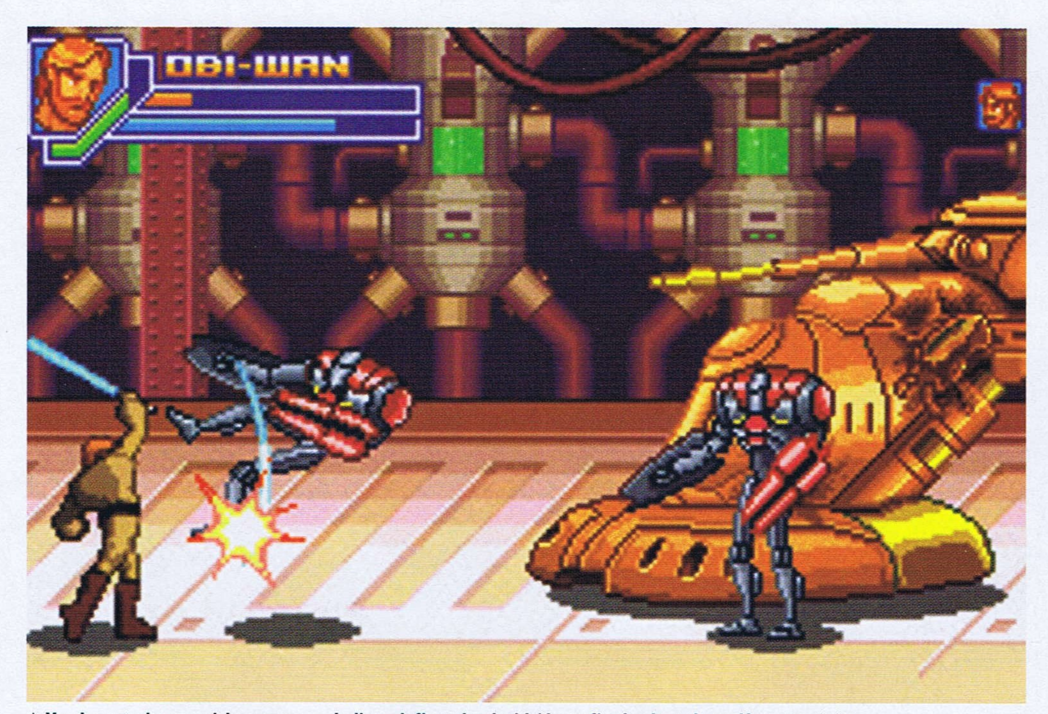
Fine, but later on it gets so tricky, your main concern is avoiding enemies, not grabbing coins; in some sections the whole bottom screen will be full of spiky bombs and drawing a path through a level with no platform at the bottom is tough. Still, if you've drawn a direct path into an enemy, you can always blow onto the screen to get rid of the clouds.

So not only is *Yoshi's Touch & Go* one of the most addictive DS games around, alongside *Pac-Pix* and *Touch! Kirby*, this is the best use of the touch screen we've seen. Brilliant.

**TOM EAST**



DUAL ★★★★★
TOUCH ★★★★★
**4**



△ You have to be as quick as a, erm... Jedi, to deflect the droids' laser fire back at them. If you can't be bothered, just hack them down. They'll probably drop a few health bonuses anyway. They're nice like that.



△ You can unlock special Jedi moves as you progress through the boring levels.

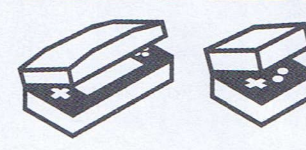


△ These are the dumbest droids of the lot. Just move up to avoid their laser fire.

△ The droids are dense, but it's hard when you're fighting off four of them.

△ Save your Jedi mind skills for when you're getiing your face kicked in.

# STAR WARS
## REVENGE OF THE SITH



**FROM:** UBISOFT **PLAYERS:** 2 **SINGLE CART LINK** NO
**MICROPHONE:** NO **OUT:** NOW **COST:** £30

### **Put your** stylus away…



△ Team up with a mate and have two-player co-op saber scraps.



△ Battling a droid carrying a giant flag. Ouch, that fabric chafes.

We were going to run two *Revenge of the Sith* reviews this issue, one on DS and one on GBA. That was until we tried them both and found out, to our horror, that they're exactly the bloody same.

The only differences are that the lightsaber swooshes sound meatier on DS and you can use your stylus to enter your name and upgrade your skills at the end of a level. And seeing as the DS bottom screen is just a pointless stats page, what we've got is the same saber slashing nonsense on both machines. It takes the piss.

Our hopes had been raised by last month's fantastic *Lego Star Wars*, but *Revenge of the Sith* is just the same old 2D scrolling beat-'em up we've seen so many times before. You know the sort - run right and thwack baddies with big stick. Only this time you're playing as either Anakin or Obi-Wan, and slashing some dumb droids with a lightsaber. Okay, there is slightly more to it than that, as you can deflect droid fire with your lightsaber and if you've gone on a particularly badass killing spree, your rage meter will increase, and you'll get to perform your Jedi skills, taking out everyone in the room with your mind.

But what drags this into the brown is the stupidity of the droids. Yes, they're Star Wars droids, but here they are so thick and most of the time you can just run around them and slash from behind. The boss battles aren't much better – on the first level you have to take out a bomb-dropping craft by slashing upwards, then watch it transform into a laser firing four-legged thing. Again, just walk around the laser and hack from the back.

Despite the brainless bots, there are momentary bursts of excitement when around six droids turn up on screen at once and the laser fire is filling the room, forcing you to turn and deflect constantly. Or you can just wade in with your lightsaber, hoping that dying droids will drop some health bonuses. After you've finished them all off just run right and start slashing again. Sigh…

You can be either Anakin or Obi-Wan, so you can play out the dark side or the rebels' story. But then playing through *Revenge of the Sith* once is bad enough, twice would be torture. If you want to play handheld Star Wars, please go for *Lego*.

**"ONCE IS BAD ENOUGH, TWICE WOULD BE TORTURE"**

**TOM EAST**



# WARIO WARE TWISTED

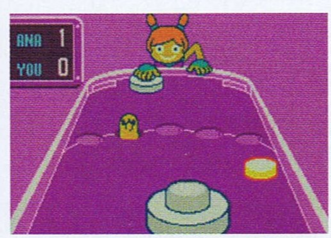


**FROM:** NINTENDO
**SAVE:** ON CART
**PLAYERS:** 1-2
**OUT:** JUNE 17TH
**SINGLE CART LINK:** NO
**COST:** £30

## **Take him by his little hand** and go like this…



△ Warioman, as he appears between stages. The garlic-eating fool…





△ There are four variations of this to collect in the Souvenir mode.

Nintendo's Revolution may well focus on exciting new ways to control games. In which case we sincerely hope the *Wario Ware* team has been at the heart of the development process; because each of the four games in the *Wario Ware* series so far has been distinguished by its exemplary use of the hardware available. From the simplicity of the original GBA version, which discarded any gaming concept that required any more than half a second of genuine thought, to its four-player Gamecube party version and the tactile brilliance of the DS edition, *Wario Ware* has always specialised in delivering the unexpected.

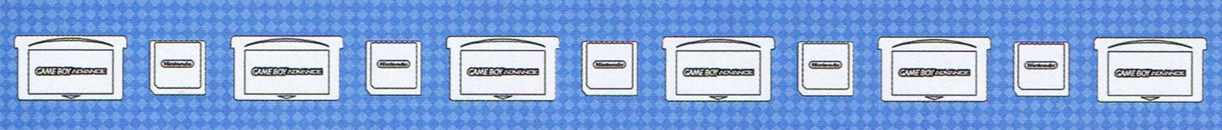
This time the twist is a motion-sensing control system that easily matches the stylus-driven DS version for intuitive ease of use.

Like *Yoshi's Universal Gravitation* (reviewed on page 50) the cartridge is fitted with a special chip that picks up your hand movements while playing. Hold the GBA upright, turning it as though it was a steering wheel, and the game reacts instantly. Sometimes you'll have to press the A-button as well, but that's as complicated as it will ever get.

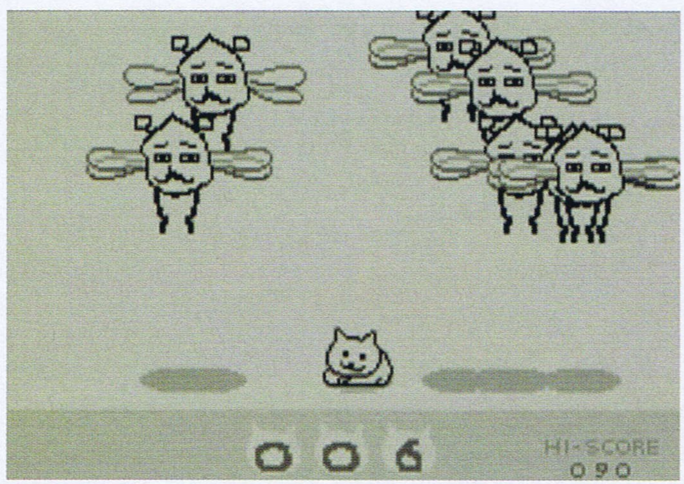
Unlike *Universal Gravitation*, which only detects left, right or neutral positions, *Wario Ware Twisted* is completely analogue and incredibly sensitive – so sensitive, it features a mini-game based on the challenge of holding the GBA completely motionless. We wouldn't be surprised to learn that this thing was picking up the pulse in our sweaty thumbs.

> **"WARIO WARE TWISTED EASILY MATCHES THE DS VERSION FOR INTUITIVE EASE OF USE"**

The final masterful touch is the addition of a rumble motor, which provides the physical feedback that makes it feel almost like the GBA is connected to something other than just the air. Whenever you move the



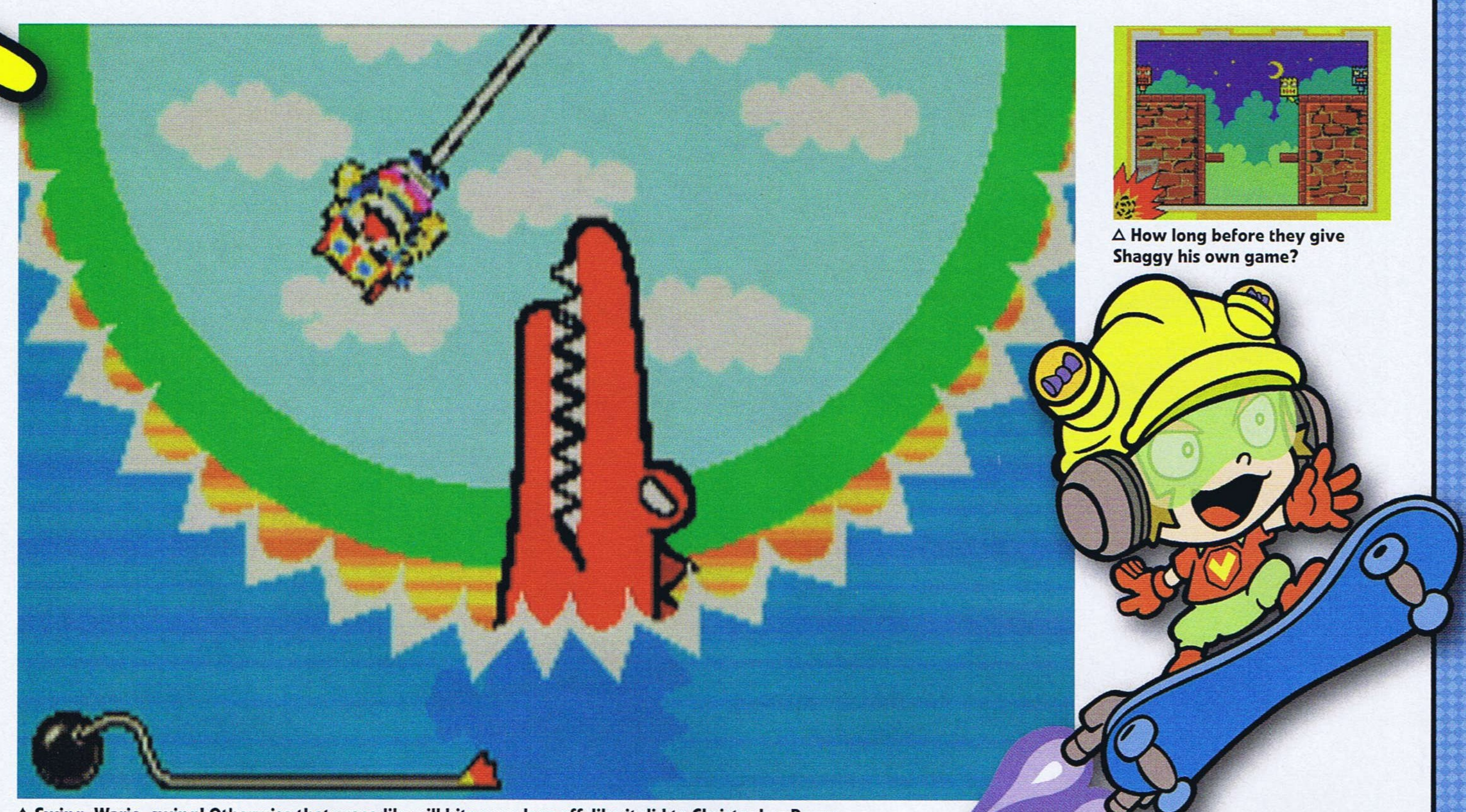


△ It's a shoot-'em-up. Your character is the tiny cat, which is sitting on a laser gun.



△ The ball flies straight up the screen while you rotate the course. Unusual…


△ Swing, Wario, swing! Otherwise that crocodile will bite your legs off, like it did to Christopher Reeve.

△ How long before they give Shaggy his own game?

GBA to select something from one of the rotary menu screens, the whole thing clicks at the exact moment the cursor slips off one option and flicks onto the next.

It's like the volume control on a stereo – you know, the kind that clicks as you spin it. Apply enough pressure and the dial slips into the next notch as it turns. The technical term for this is 'satisfying'.

That's what the rumble motor does for *Twisted*, and it wouldn't be anywhere near as enjoyable without it. This we know, because the UK version sent by Nintendo (security-taped into an iron-clad GBA, no less) had taken a bit of a bashing in the post, and the rumble motor didn't work at all. There's actually an option to turn off the vibration, which really ought to be labelled 'ruin game'.

So, with *Twisted* buzzing away in your hands like it's supposed to, you've got a staggeringly cool new way to play the classic *Wario Ware* mini-game format. The structure is the same as the other versions, with 200-odd five-second Nintendo vignettes fired





## WARIO PARTY

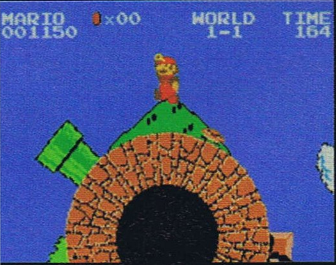
*A tilt sensor isn't exactly the kind of thing you'd expect to be able to share, but it works brilliantly in the handful of bonus toys that support two players. In this one, each person holds the GBA with one hand, pressing L or R to move their character's arm. Tilting the GBA makes the characters lean left or right, and if they don't touch hands in the middle, somebody falls down. The aim is to lure the other player into overbalancing by faking them out with hand movements and a bit of GBA-wrestling. It's pretty unique and surprisingly tactical.*



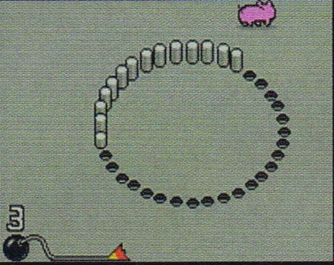



# NOBODY DOES IT BETTER

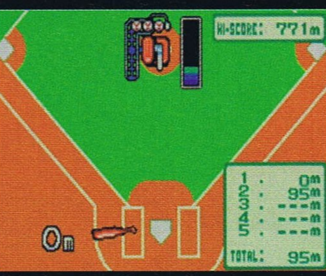
*There are a few hundred reasons why* Wario Ware Twisted *is the best GBA game since* Advance Wars. *Here are just eight of them…*




**CIRCULAR SUPER MARIO BROS**
We'll print that again, in italics, just in case you didn't spot it the first time: ***CIRCULAR SUPER MARIO BROS!!!***



**(DO NOT) RELEASE THE PIGS**
The aim of this game was to keep the pig trapped by rotating the fence around it. We failed, but doesn't he look cute?



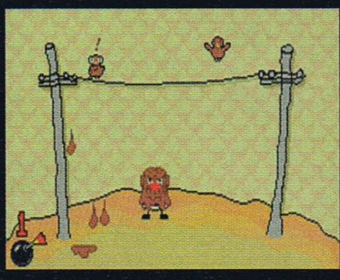

**SWING LOW, SWEET GBA**
Whatever they do with *Mario Baseball*, it won't have a control method as satisfying as this. Wind it up and let it rip!




**HOLE IN ONE (HUNDRED)**
The harder you 'swing' the GBA, the harder you'll hit the ball. There are tactics involved here (not that we use them).



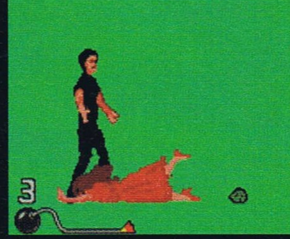

**FAT MAN ON A MOTORBIKE**
He can actually fly! Time it right and Wario can soar over large parts of the *Excitebike* course, hopping on Goombas.



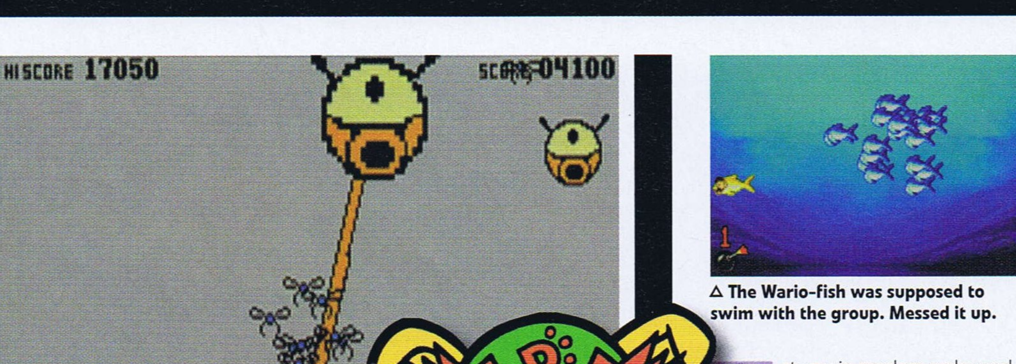
**IF I HAD THE WINGS OF A SPARROW…**
…The dirty great arse of a crow… Dodging is easy until Superbird drops an exploding dump that sprays everywhere.




**LET'S GET PHYSICAL**
Work out until Wario hits his ideal weight. But don't go too far, otherwise you end up looking as thin as Victoria Beckham.

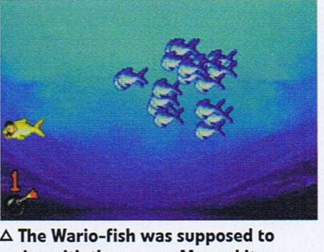


**GAME BOY'S GREATEST BLOOPERS**
All you have to do is press A to make the lady avoid a mishap as she rushes to embrace her dude. But it's funnier not to.

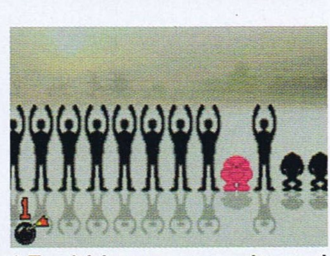



## HELLO PYORO

*Pyoro is the little red bird who's featured in every* Wario Ware *title to date. His shoot-'em-up bonus games have always been among the highlights of the series, and this one is no exception. You have to plunge Pyoro's beak into fat enemies, then waggle the GBA to inflate them until they pop. It's almost the very definition of satisfaction.*



△ The Wario-fish was supposed to swim with the group. Messed it up.



△ The pink bear was supposed to stand up with the men. Messed it up again.

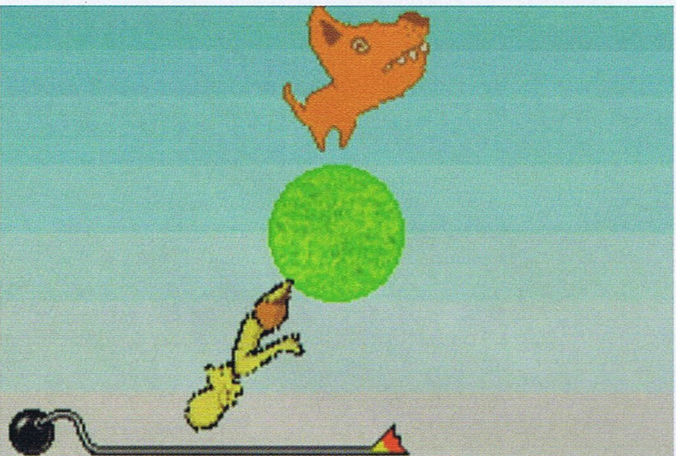
at you in random order and increasingly rapid succession. Tilt, shake or spin to complete the task, then the next one shoots onto the screen. Repeat until the whole thing gets impossibly fast, your fingers lose their grip and your brain can no longer tell left from right.

Some of the best games are the ones that call for 360° rotation. In one of the more substantial boss stages, you have a little stick-man walking along a bumpy line. As the line gets curvier, eventually snaking all the way around the edge of the screen, you have to keep turning the GBA to keep the stick-man upright. It has the simplest graphics you'll ever see on a GBA, but in its own way this is every bit as jaw-dropping as the most graphically advanced Gamecube titles.

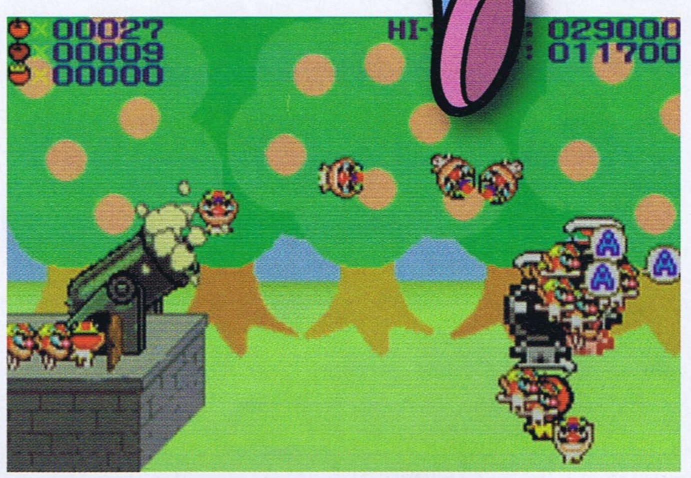
It's quite challenging too – possibly the most difficult, and certainly the largest of the *Wario Ware* titles. Completing it will take months and, unlike the other versions, there are other incentives to keep playing even when you've grown tired of setting new high scores.

Every *Wario Ware* game offers bonus toys and expanded versions of the mini-games as rewards for progress, but *Twisted* takes it to a new level. Whenever you pass a boss stage, which usually happens after completing around 15 successive rounds, you earn a random item for the Souvenir mode. It could be anything from an egg-timer to a musical instrument, an interactive

△ It's old-school tennis with tilty controls. Shame there isn't a bigger version of this in the Souvenir mode.



△ **In this one you have to run away from the dog. Sometimes there are two dogs, which makes things two times as difficult – that's the power of maths at work.**




△ **The mini-game with a plot – the tiny Warios are picking apples from an orchard, but the trees send out an army of kamikaze Granny Smiths. Battle time! Really!**

picture or even a complete bonus game. There are more than 200 to collect, and you'll be seeing new ones long after you've unlocked all the characters and seen all the mini-games. While most of the souvenir items are admittedly very simple, and

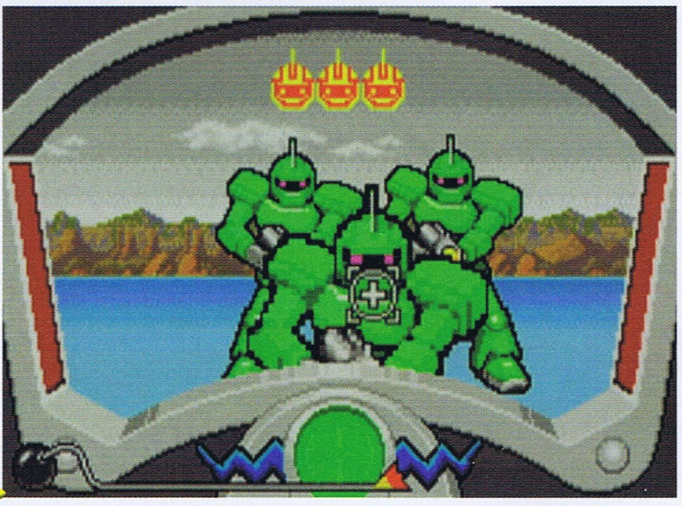
## "THE BONUS GAMES ARE BETTER VALUE THAN MANY FULL-PRICE TITLES..."

probably not the kind of things that will hold your attention for more than a couple of minutes, you'll be disappointed when you finally complete the collection and realise that there's nothing more to play for. Loads of the items are almost identical, but the full bonus games are superb – there are 21 of them in all, and as a group they're considerably better value than many a full-price title (*Yoshi's Universal Gravitation*, anyone?)

It's the best incentive system we've ever seen, although it wouldn't really work in anything but *Wario Ware*. And that's the beauty of this series. Despite this being the fourth UK instalment and despite the core concept being one of the simplest things since *Tetris*, *Wario Ware Twisted* feels utterly unique. Treasure it.

**MARTIN KITTS**

**5**



△ **Shoot the green robots. Not the greatest mini-game, but some of the others look rubbish in screenshots, so it would've been rude not to print a fairly nice one.**

△ Despite the card thing, you actually battle in real-time. Using a, er... key.

△ Those blue dots on the right are EXP. You need to collect these to level up.

# KINGDOM HEARTS CHAIN OF MEMORIES




△ There are five mini-worlds to explore – each of the Disney based.




△ Cards unlock the game's doors. Each has an effect on the other side.



**FROM:** SQUARE-ENIX **SAVE:** ON CART **PLAYERS:** 1-2 **OUT:** NOW **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO **COST:** £35

## Square and Disney collide in this refreshing RPG.



There's a pretty big problem with *Kingdom Hearts* right from the word go, in that it assumes you're already well-versed in all things *Kingdom Hearts* – particularly the events of the original PS2 adventure. Now, we did actually play the first game (it was pretty good as it happens) but, to be perfectly honest, we didn't finish it. Which makes the opening hour of *Chain of Memories* feel a little strange; like you've been invited to a party where you only have a vague recollection of the people around you.

If you *never* played *Kingdom Hearts* then it's safe to say that you'll wind up with a lot more questions than answers – who the hell is this Sora character that you're controlling? Why the hell is he hanging around with Goofy and Donald? More to the point, why should you care? However, this initial sense of alienation doesn't create an impenetrable barrier to getting into the game as a whole – but the frequent references to events from the first game leads to a feeling of detachment at times.

It's an unfortunate way to kick off proceedings considering that, aside

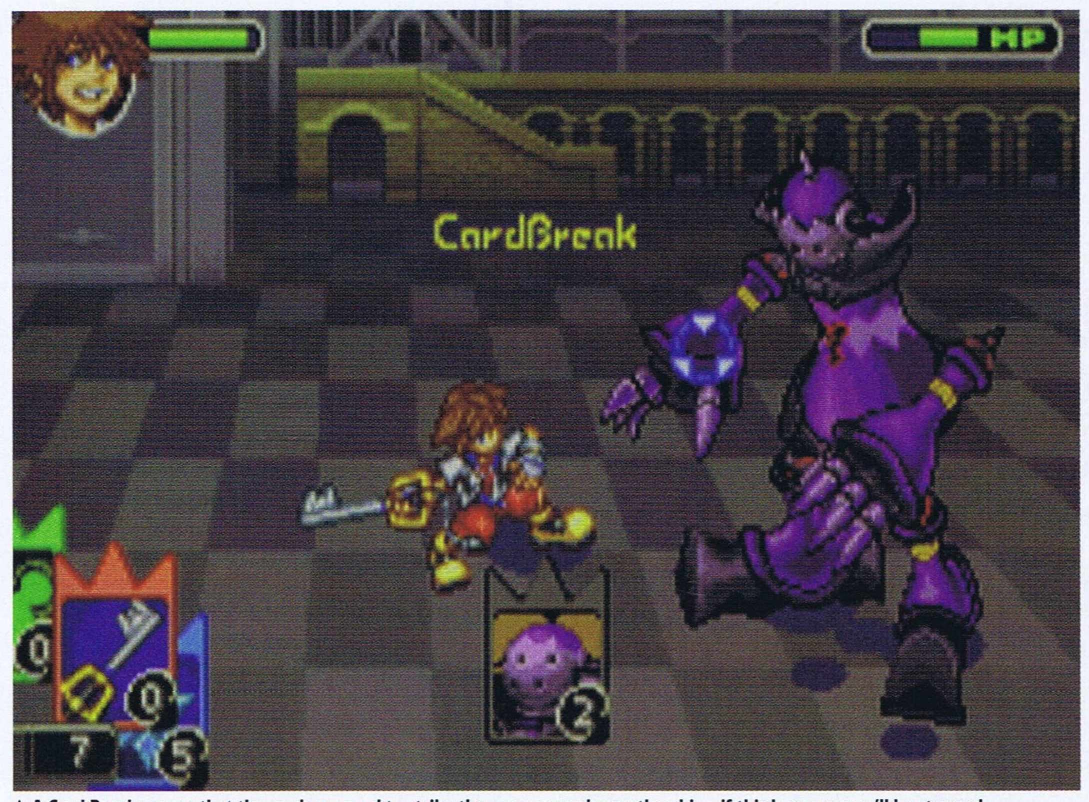


△ Castle Oblivion is where it all happens – only it's not really real...



△ This fella isn't real either. He's a bit of a nutter who wants to 'test' you.





△ A Card Break means that the card you used to strike the enemy was lower than his – if this happens you'll be stunned.


△ As you progress, more powerful cards become available to you.


△ Despite deck building, it doesn't really play like a card game.


△ Collect EXP from fallen enemies to help level up.


△ Each card has a numerical value. The higher the number the higher the damage.


△ Enemies can be seen in the overworld, allowing you to avoid them if you wish.


△ This is Wonderland. Each area has a strong Disney theme complete with…


△ …all the irritating characters that gave us nightmares as children.

from the problem outlined above, initial impressions are very good. The game, as you'd expect from Square-Enix, is impeccably presented, and, if you can stomach the inevitable sugary Disney coating, you'll find that it's well designed, with some lovely character animation and a great musical score. Dialogue between characters is short, sharp and not overly verbose (a pet hate of ours – particularly on handheld RPG's) and your progress through the game's locations is reasonably paced, not letting you get too bored in any one area before moving you onwards.

It also boasts its fair share of fresh touches. The battle system bares some resemblance to *Symphonia*'s. You can see enemies on the paths you travel and running into them will trigger a battle sequence. From here it's real-time action all the way, as you move and attack within the battle area as you please.

Underneath this runs the game's important card system. Fortunately, it's done quite well. In order to attack, you need cards in your hand. Hammering away at the A button uses the cards in the order they appear in the deck (although you can be more selective if you want) and once you run out, you can simply recharge your deck to bring them back – allowing you to perform another string of attacks.

These cards also play an important part in the game's overworld. They're required for everything, from summoning your comrades to opening the doors. Cleverly, the cards you use to open the doors can even be used to change what you'll find on the other side, causing enemies behind the door to weaken, grow in number (handy if you want to level up) or even fall asleep which helps you to avoid encounters. These smart little touches are ultimately what make the game worth investigating. They work well and, despite *Chain of Memories*' baffling and sometimes silly storyline, help create a surprisingly enjoyable RPG adventure.

**GERAINT EVANS**

4

# YOSHI'S UNIVERSAL GRAVITATION



**FROM:** NINTENDO **SAVE:** ON CART **PLAYERS:** 1 **OUT:** NOW **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO **COST:** £30

## The one where Yoshi invites you to spin on something



△ **Tilt the GBA to make the water slosh around. This bit is okayish.**



△ **In this screen you've got to make the coins float towards Yoshi.**

Nice name, shame about the game. If this UK release had followed the US version in renaming itself *Yoshi Topsy Turvy*, at least you'd know not to buy it just because it sounds fairly cool.

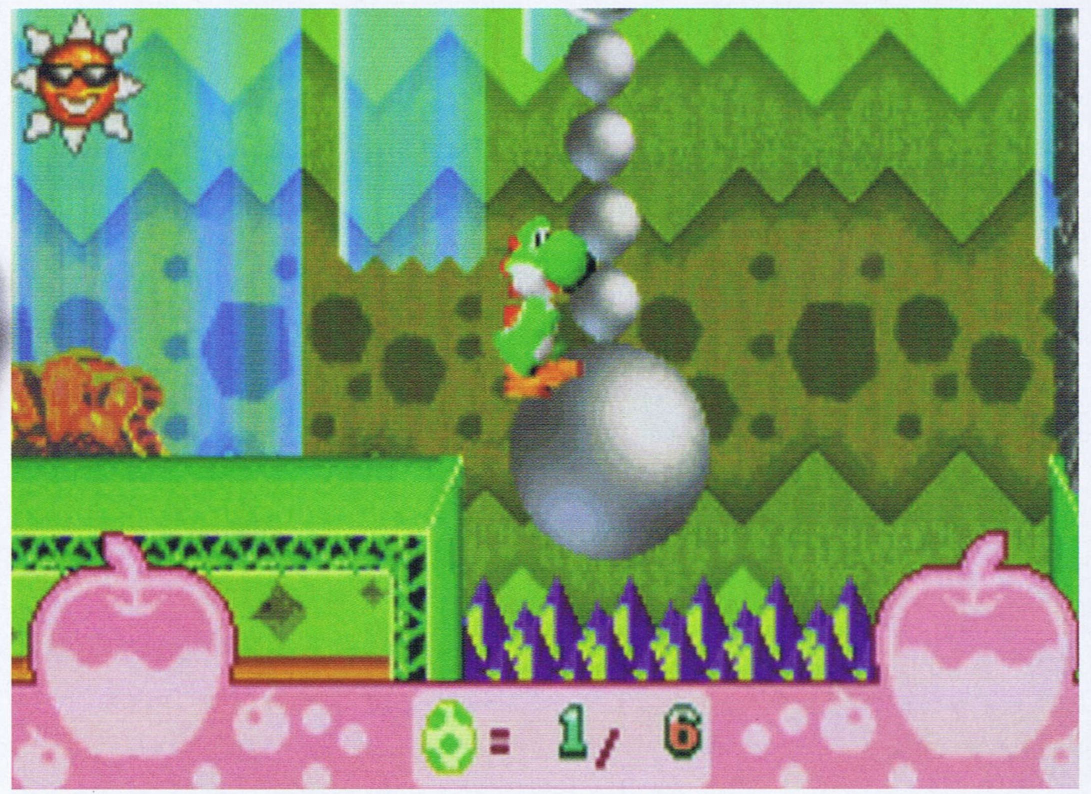
In *Yoshi's Universal Gravitation*, it's all platforming business as usual – until you tilt the GBA. A special sensor built into the chunky cartridge detects which way you're tipping the machine and adjusts the in-game gravity accordingly, allowing Yoshi to walk up walls or setting various objects in motion.

Now that's indisputably a brilliant idea. You use the D-pad and buttons, as normal, to make Yoshi run, jump and eat enemies, but you get an added element of tiltability too. Tip the GBA one way to make Yoshi slide down an icy slope, rock it back and forth to set a wrecking ball swinging, jiggle it a bit to wake a sleeping creature, and so on.

The concept is great but the execution is super shoddy. Instead of giving us the kind of memorable, expertly designed levels for which Nintendo is renowned, developer Artoon (yes, it's another title that Nintendo has farmed out to a third-party) has divided the game into tiny chunks of blandness.

Each level is a collection of bite-size segments, rarely covering more than a handful of screens in area. There's some sort of activity to perform in each one, such as standing Yoshi on a ball, then rolling it through the gateway to the next tiny section. To complete each one the 'right' way, you have to fulfil simple objectives like collecting a certain number of coins or killing a certain number of increasingly tough enemies.

But the game never really gets going, thanks to all the annoying breaks, and the gravity-sensing feature is confusingly half-baked. If you've played the phenomenally good *Wario Ware Twisted* you'll know how intuitive a bit of analogue tilt control can be. Unfortunately this one isn't analogue at all – it's either left, right or centre. When you're swinging that wrecking ball, timing and precision have no part to play. In fact Nintendo could have just put this function on the otherwise redundant shoulder buttons and done away with the pointless expense of the tilt



△ Yoshi swings on his wall-destroying ball. If there was an analogue element to the tilt sensor, this might have been fun.



△ Can't reach the cherry? Make the cherry lean towards Yoshi.



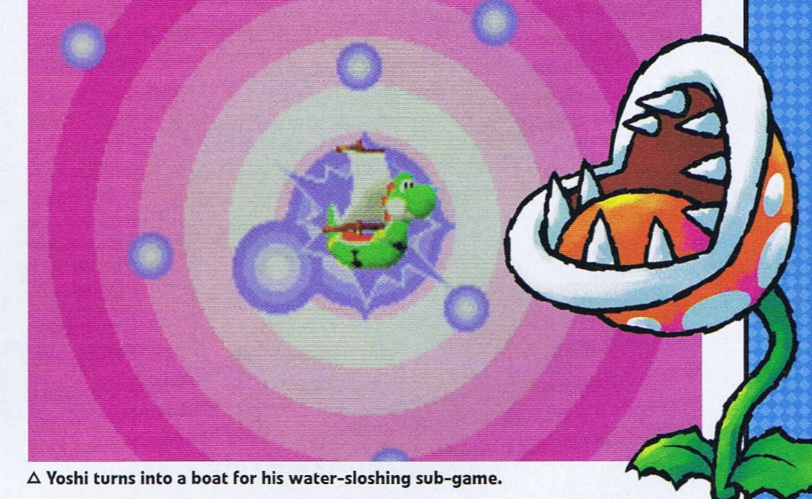
△ Don't slide into walls covered in spikes. They're deadly.



△ Yoshi may well be inside that plant. It was nice knowing him.



△ What's happening? It's hard to tell because the graphics are such a mess.



△ Yoshi turns into a boat for his water-sloshing sub-game.

sensor. And because there's no rumble, there's no feedback other than seeing the characters lean a tiny bit, so you can never be sure that you're tilting the right way. Or even that you're tilting at all.

It's also a remarkably ugly game. Plain backdrops and fuzzy pre-rendered characters ape the hand-drawn look of Yoshi's SNES and N64 outings, with no success whatsoever. If this simplicity was in order to accomodate some lovely full-screen rotation effects then we'd soon forget about it, but nothing that interesting ever seems to happen.

If the idea of motion-sensing games intrigues you, buy *Wario Ware Twisted* to see how it should be done. Maybe somebody at Artoon should have looked at a copy too. If you want to see a far more imaginative platforming take on the effects of gravity, *Wendy: Every Witch Way* did it years ago, miles better, on Game Boy Color. One of Nintendo's mascots, out-platformed by a TDK title... The shame.

**MARTIN KITTS**




△ Somebody hacked off Yoshi's limbs and tied his living torso to a balloon.

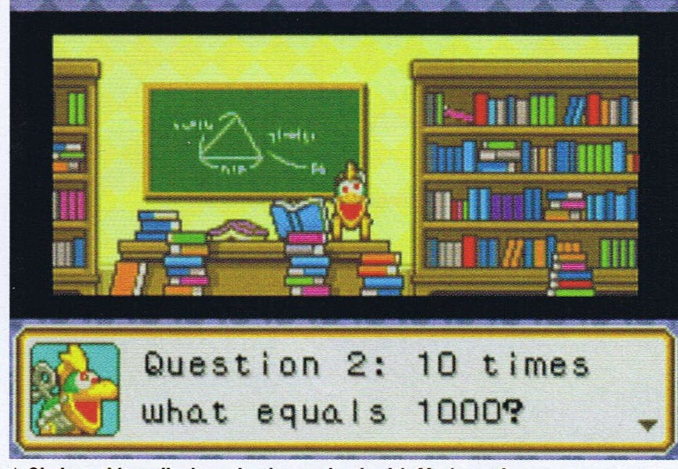




△ Rescue monkeys by running them over with your speedboat. Okay…



△ Speed saw to drop Thwomp on Peach's head. Young love.




△ Oh dear, this really does plumb new depths. It's Mario maths.

# MARIO PARTY ADVANCE

**FROM:** NINTENDO
**SAVE:** ON CART
**PLAYERS:** 1-4
**OUT:** 24TH JUNE
**SINGLE CART LINK:** YES
**COST:** £30

## Yet more Mario mini-games. He's a party animal…



Picking a bloke's nose, shaking a dog's paw and making a girl snort her snot. *Wario Ware* has proven that a compilation of mini-games can be loads of fun, but throw a boring board game into the mix and it all goes wrong.

All we want to do is play the mini-games from the off. We don't want to fart around rolling dice, getting a bloody train ticket for Goomba or even helping Shroomlock solve crimes. But, in order to unlock all the mini-games in *Mario Party Advance* you'll be treading the board and trying to complete fifty tedious tasks in Shroom City for days and days.

Unlike the Cube Parties, the board game is a one-player experience Choose from Mario, Luigi, Peach or Yoshi and then you are given four mushrooms to play with. Every roll of the dice uses up one mushroom, but land on a green blob and you'll be given an extra roll of the dice, and if you hit a minus mark, one will be taken away. Lose all your mushrooms and it's game over, but if you complete quests and win mini-games, you'll get some extra 'shrooms.

It is so infuriating. For starters the quests are so boring. First up, you've got to grab a train ticket for Goomba. It's dull, but no worries as the train station is only two blocks away from Goomba's gaff. But later on you'll have to travel for miles in your crap car just to find out if Mr I (the big blue eye) fancies Flutter, only for him to say 'no, she's a minger.' Okay, he's slightly friendlier than that.

If that sounds dull, wait until you have to read the part where Mr I tells you that he doesn't fancy Flutter for the tenth time. Some of the storylines behind the quests are so text-heavy, and if you run out of mushrooms on your way, you'll have to start at the beginning of the board and read the whole thing all over again. This wouldn't be so bad if it wasn't so easy to lose your mushrooms.

Obviously there's a random element to rolling the dice, so you can easily lose a 'shroom on the way to a quest, but, some of the mini-games are so tough that completing them first time is tricky and you won't always be able to add to your dwindling mushroom collection.

Take Bill Bounce, where you have to bounce on bombs that fly across

△ Drive into the wall on the ice race and you'll spin your sled.


△ Pick up Shy Guys in the lift and take them to the correct floor.


△ He's done golf and tennis. Now Mario takes up quidditch.


△ If you're too slow the sunflowers will wilt and die.


△ Laugh at the dolphin's 'jokes' to win. The trick is knowing when to laugh.



△ It's the tedious board game. Land on a yellow mark and you'll lose a mushroom.

△ Fan the bubbles into the sun to pop them.

the screen to get to the top. Bouncing on the first set is easy, but if you fail to time your jump just right, you'll miss the second one, fall to the bottom and, just to compound your misery, you'll be twatted in the face by one of the bombs. Still, with practice you'll complete Bill Bounce, but when a single failure means having to go through the pointless back story to the quest all over again, it really is painful.

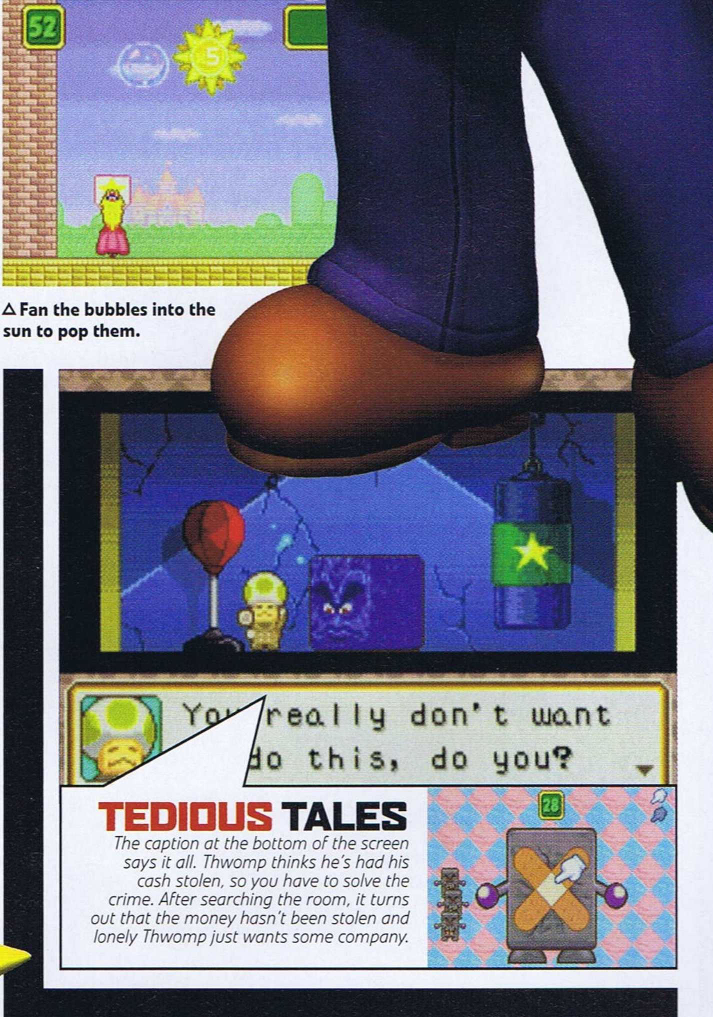
It's a shame; most of the mini-games are decent enough and the best ones offer the same adrenaline rush that you get from *Wario Ware*'s ten second treats. Bunny Belt has you bashing a sequence of buttons to load toy rabbits onto a conveyor belt, while in Pest Aside you have to quickly spray water and weedkiller on sunflowers before they perish. But for every Pest Aside, there's a Shell Stack which is like a slow, easy *Tetris* with some green shells. Still, we'd rather play Shell Stack twenty times in a row than have to drive around the board losing mushrooms.

Of course there is more to *Mario Party* than Shroom City, as once you've unlocked the mini-games, you can battle against your mates, although sadly it does not support the wireless adapter, so you'll have to dust off your link cables.

If not for the board game pain, this would have been okay, but as it is, it's just another lifeless *Mario Party* to sling onto the slowly growing pile.

**TOM EAST**

2




## TEDIOUS TALES

*The caption at the bottom of the screen says it all. Thwomp thinks he's had his cash stolen, so you have to solve the crime. After searching the room, it turns out that the money hasn't been stolen and lonely Thwomp just wants some company.*




**We fill our pockets with the latest GBA and DSperipherals** so you don't have to empty yours on the wrong kit.

## LEATHER CASE FOR DS

**LOGIC 3 ● £10 ● WWW.SPECTRAVIDEO.COM**

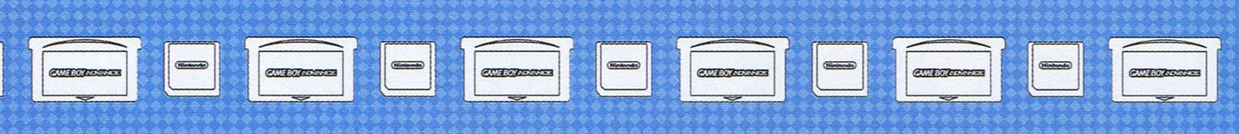
If a combination of overloaded pockets and gravity are pulling your trousers downwards, why not take some of the weight off with this stylish case for your DS and stylus? Fashioned from luxuriantly lined leather and elastic, it can carry up to one DS with very little room for anything else. Why not add the optional shoulder strap, wrist hoop and belt loop for that 'please mug me' look? This is for those who like the feeling of leather next to skin.

### MUCH THE SAME AS...

**YOUR POCKET**

**FROM: LEVI, PRIMARK ETC ● FREE**

Given the choice and the rugged clamshell design of the DS, why not simply jam the thing into your back pocket and save the tenner towards a set of encyclopaedias, a Tizer habit or a new game?







## WHAT IS A BEST BUY?

Every month we'll pick out one piece of kit that stands out from the rest and award it our coveted Best Buy badge. A Best Buy will combine superb quality with fantastic value for money.




## TECH PACK

**JOYTECH ● £15 ● WWW.JOYTECH.COM**

While it might make a bigger dent in your wallet, this will certainly leave a bigger bulge in your pocket. The case is rugged and comes with straps to hold your DS in place and a mesh-covered space to store four GBA or DS games. While the adjustable headphones don't produce the most wonderful sound quality, the in-car charger is ideal for mid-motorway Pictochat.

### MUCH THE SAME AS...



**OFFICIAL CARRY CASE**
FROM: NINTENDO ● £9.99 -£14.99
The official DS cases come in three sizes, including a small case that still manages to hold eight games and a power adapter for £9.99. £14.99 buys you the much larger Deluxe case or the backpack.

## DS STARTER PACK

**LOGIC 3 ● £10 ● WWW.SPEKTRAVIDEO.COM**

This pack provides numerous delights. The PVC case is robust enough, although without any interior pockets there is a chance that all of your games will fall out. The headphones don't produce the finest sound quality either, but few could argue with having a USB charger and spare stylus in the pack.

### MUCH THE SAME AS...



**YOUR HEADPHONES**
FROM: YOUR DISCMAN, IPOD ETC ● FREE
None of the headphones we've tested so far match up to the pairs of 'phones that come free with any portable music player.

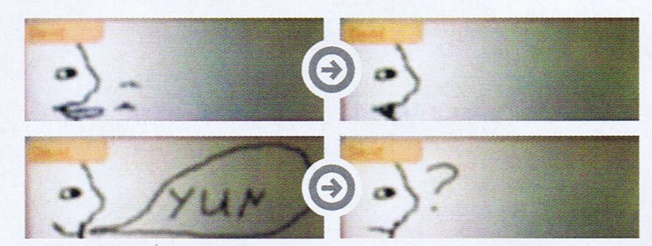
# PICTO ANIMATIONS

**Your finest works** immortalised on these here pages…

By some strange coincidence, two of the Picto Animations we received this month had people eating flies. In an even weirder coincidence, the day we received them Geraint had also done another fly-themed animation. Although, like the revolting little Welshman that he is, his involved vomit and faeces and, well, it was a bit crap, amusing nobody but himself. We think there might be something wrong with him. Anyway…

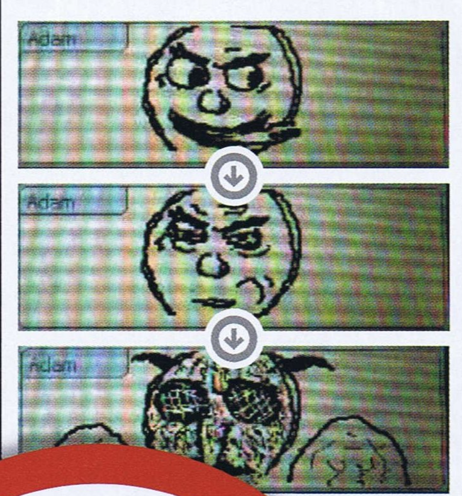
## 'FLY' V1.0

This is my animation of someone eating a fly. I hope you like it! Says David Hoyes. *Thanks very much.*




## 'FLY' V2.0

This one comes courtesy Adam Vernon – and we think it's safe to say it's just a little better than David's, with excellent detail, some subtle touches (gotta love that chewing animation) and a little touch of WAH! at the end for good measure. Adam also pointed out that you can actually store around 80 frames of animation in the Pictochat log, as opposed to the 35 that Geraint said you could.




## PICTO ART

Last but least are these lovely pieces of artwork from Sjoerd Antens from the Netherlands. Wario and, er, Rembrant, together at last.






## HOW TO DO IT…

1. *Draw a little picture of something and then click on Send.*
2. *Now copy that picture back into your drawing board and make a little change to it before sending it again.*
3. *Now copy that picture onto your drawing board again and edit it for the third frame in the animation. Keep sending and copying your picture back and forth, making little changes along the way.*
4. *You can have up to 35 (or maybe 80) frames of animation stored at any one time, this is shown by the meter to the left hand side of the message log.*
5. *Once you've finished your final frame of your animation, press the up arrow to flick back through the message log until you reach the top.*
6. *Now hold down the left shoulder button and then half a second later hold down the right shoulder button.*




### We want your Pictochat artwork

Have you done something amazingly creative with your DS and Pictochat? If you've made pictures, animations or anything else you'd like to share with the world, we'd love to see it. As you can't save your pictures on the DS this is what we'd like you to do. When you've finished with your Picto art, turn the lights off, take a photo with a digital camera and send it as an email (titled Pictoart) to ngc@futurenet.co.uk. If you haven't got access to a digital camera, just send a normal photograph to Pictoart, NGC, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. The best get printed here.

DUEL MASTERS
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D MAX

**Parents:** Your child would like to register for the D-MAX program from Wizards of the Coast. When you send in this form, he/she will be sent a membership kit including fun printed materials related to Duel Masters and a membership card. From time to time he/she may also be sent other physical mailings and emails. In addition, he/she will gain access to a special area of the Duel Masters web site. While visiting the Duel Masters web site, your child may change his/her contact information and participate in online surveys. Before we can allow your child's personal and demographic information to be viewed and modified online, we want to notify you about our online information collection practices and obtain your permission. We ask you first read through the "Note to Parents" in the Wizards Website Privacy Statement (http://www.wizards.com/parents), which identifies the personal information that Wizards of the Coast collects from children online and the way we handle such information. If you cannot connect to our web site, our customer service team can provide you with the information and answer any other questions (++ 32) 70 233 277 or (+44) (0) 8457 125599. When you have finished and wish to provide your consent, please sign this registration form where it says "Parent/Guardian's Signature." *Please note that once you have signed and sent us this form, you always have the ability to: (i.) review your child's personal information collected online; (ii.) request that we delete your child's personal information online; (iii.) stop us from further using or collecting additional personal information online about your child without gaining new permission from you. To do so, please contact us using the information provided above.*






**OUR PROMISE** Our reviewers are the most talented and knowledgeable Nintendo fans in the business. We don't only play games at work – we play them at home too, just like you. We ensure that we've played games through to the end so that we can give you a proper verdict – and one that saves you from wasting money.

NGC THE VERDICT YOU DESERVE!

# REVIEWS

## OUR SCORING SYSTEM

**0-24** Crushingly awful, massively dull. Rest assured this game is absolute crud.

**25-49** A dissapointing title, stashed with nasty faults and likely to be short on any quality.

**50-74** Some great bits, some not-so great bits. Decent but definitely problems.

**75-89** Great fun, brilliantly programmed at times, but probably flawed.

**90+** Rarely awarded, a 90+ is essential. Buy with confidence.

NGC STAR GAME

## HARVEST MOON SONG OF HAPPINESS

There's no actual singing in it, but it does have plenty of root vegetables. Which makes it officially the funniest game on Earth… P68

## DONKEY KONGA 3

'Scientifically' proven (by Kittsy) to contain more J-Pop than the human brain could possibly hope to cope with. It's plainly not right – but it feels so good… P72

## MEET THE NGC TEAM

E3's upon us and we all like to prepare in our own, 'special' way…



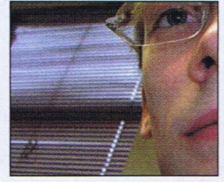
**TOM. E** *"Just an umbrella. My afro gained two stone from all the American sweat and spittle flying around at the conference last year."*



**MARTIN** *"As security gets tighter each year, I've taken to ingesting the surgical instruments I need for a genuinely enjoyable E3."*



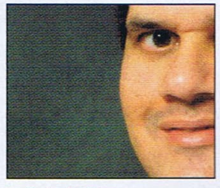
**PAUL** *"While you're all poncing about in LA, I'll be in the office doing as little wor… er, I mean, um, I'll be… er… doing the art… stuff."*



**GERAINT** *Unable to afford the air fare, he usually has a full body wax and coats himself in vaseline ready for his trans-atlantic swim.*



**TOM. S** *"I'll be manning the RNLI hotline by the looks of things." Why's that? "Well according to Ger's mum, he can't actually swim…"*



**REGGIE** *"Practicing my growling techniques and pumping my biceps up to regulation WWE circumference by bench-pressing nuns."*

"Hard work and good fortune bring their own rewards"





△ Sometimes mushrooms are the only things to eat. Don't worry, he won't put anything poisonous in his gob.



**OLYMPIAN**
*Check this out – the Flower Bud Village swimming contest. It starts with a pleasant stroll on the beach and ends in a button-mashing frenzy of whirlpools and shark attacks. Foolish 'Leon' strips down to her cossie but insists on wearing her straw boater.*



**INFO BURST**

| | |
|---|---|
| PUBLISHER/DEVELOPER | MARVELOUS INTERACTIVE |
| RELEASE DATE | NOW (JAP) |
| PLAYERS | 1-4 |
| MEM. CARD PAGES | 53 |
| GBA LINK-UP | NO |
| SURROUND SOUND | NO |
| WIDESCREEN | NO |
| COST | ¥7,140 (£35) |




# HARVEST MOON SONG OF HAPPINESS

**Packed with vitamins** and 100% GM-free, it's the role-playing farm-'em-up to make your heart sing…



Eleven o'clock on a sweltering summer morning. Five hours earlier, you were woken by squirrels scratching at your front door; a mere ten minutes ago, you plunged your hands into the well-tilled soil and pulled up the last of a bumper crop of radishes, each of them the size of your head.

There's just time to slake your thirst with a glass of milk, drawn fresh from your own cow, before sowing a few bags of tomato seeds and maybe gathering some more wood for that chicken coop you've been meaning to build.

As the sun sets you'll comb the beach for flotsam, and you'd have to say there's every chance you'll stumble across something shiny and valuable to present to your beau. It's been that kind of a day so far; the kind of day that makes you wonder: how can life possibly get any better?

The beautiful thing about *Harvest Moon* is that life does get better. Immeasurably so, as hard work and good fortune bring their own rewards. You'll never be rich beyond your dreams, but you'll be blessed with a wealth beyond money – friendship, happiness and self-sufficiency. That's what this marvellous farming RPG series is all about, and what it has consistently delivered since its SNES debut.

As always, you start as a young farmer with a humble shack to call home and a weed-ridden patch of earth to turn into a fertile, thriving farm. Hack away at enough tree stumps, break enough boulders, and eventually you'll have something you'll be proud to show off to your neighbours. Not to mention something that will, for several months of game-time, consume your farmer's every waking hour.



**DOOLITTLE**
*One objective is to befriend the animals you see running around the village. Eventually they'll start waiting outside your front door in the mornings, a bit like in the movie The Birds – which is doubly sinister because this can induce a crippling crash, with malicious wildlife causing the game to freeze. Solution – save often or leave them alone.*

> "THE KIND OF DAY THAT MAKES YOU WONDER: HOW CAN LIFE POSSIBLY GET ANY BETTER?"








△ The sheer pleasure of a well-stocked shed. This one is somebody else's.



## FOWL PLAY

*Since Harvest Moon has traditionally been a solitary experience, it came as a surprise to find a four-player party mode. Only a couple of games are unlocked to begin with, so at first you'll have to content yourself with the delights of a four-way hoe-off and something involving animals, in which we have yet to score better than a big, fat zero.*

## BEAUTIFUL NEIGHBOURHOOD




### ELLEN

*There's something vaguely earthy about this farming femme, who appeared in the SNES version. We imagine she smells of mushrooms on a compost heap – just like Felicity Kendall in The Good Life – and will grow you the fattest turnips you've ever seen.*




### TERRY

*By way of contrast to the fragrant Ellen, Terry is a veteran bushman who daubs himself in animal urine to disguise his scent while hunting. We might have mistranslated that part, but there's no doubt Tezza knows the best spots for catching monster fish.*



### SARA

*You can tell Sara is the feisty, rebellious one by the feisty, rebellious clothes she wears. In the heart of rural nowhere, miles from Mineral Town, she must have had to make her own crop top and denim skirt from bits of rubbish discarded by tourists. Creative.*




### MARIA

*Mumsy Maria dresses like a nun and works in a library, but the fact that her old man is the village mayor and owner of a fat, palatial mansion makes her the most eligible Miss this side of Monkey Mountain. Show her your smart side and she'll fall at your feet.*




### THEODORE

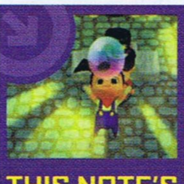
*Dad of Maria and mayor of the back of beyond, Monopoly mascot lookalike Ted can often be found presiding over village festivals attended by as many as three of the local residents. Voter apathy means he has a job and a comfortable income for life.*

*Harvest Moon* is uncompromisingly tough work at first. Before you can plant seeds you have to till the soil, which takes at least a couple of days. Then you have to water each sprout and sapling, once a day, every day, until they're ready to harvest. If you've greedily planted too many seeds, the fact that your farmer can't water more than 20-or-so before collapsing through exhaustion can make the game's early days a painful slog.

There's an energy bar showing precisely how long you've got before farmboy keels over and wakes up in hospital, so you can judge when it's wise to eat and recover some health. But until you've earned enough money to buy a few slices of extortionately priced cheesecake, fishing and foraging will be your only sources of nutrition. Both of those take time you can ill afford to spend away from the veggie plot, and as you can only carry five items at once (to begin with), your trips to the forest or river aren't going to be particularly productive.

The most obvious solution is to live according to your means. You need machinery to run a large-scale farm, so keep it small until you have the wherewithal to purchase the right equipment. Don't overstretch yourself and you'll find you enjoy life a whole lot more. *Harvest Moon* is built on good advice.

The Song of the title refers to a melody assembled by the Harvest Sprites, presumably to break the spell that saw the Harvest Goddess



### THIS NOTE'S FOR YOU

***Certain events will earn you new notes for your personal song of happiness. Attending festivals and meeting new people seem to be pretty reliable ways to snag a few tones, and even basic things like walking and eating are enough to ensure you wake up happier than when you went to sleep.***



△ At the start of the game you have a few run-ins with Leon, your incredibly grumpy rival who will no doubt turn into some sort of best buddy or grudging admirer later on. Leon keeps a mean old dog which we couldn't kill, even with a copper hoe.

"Inhabited areas are cramped and riddled with fences"



## DECORATION

*Like in Animal Crossing, you can do a spot of interior design in your humble shack. Buy enough house extensions and you'll be able to fit it with a huge kitchen and luxurious boudoir, for your wife- (or husband) to-be.*



## CROP CIRCLE

*Success breeds success. Which is to say, the more you farm, the more you can sell. And the more you sell, the more equipment you can buy to transform your backyard enterprise into a vast agri-business churning out top-quality veggies and the cutest, prize-winningest animals.*



## MINI-GAMES

*A reasonably wide selection of variable quality. This rock-climbing game happens when you want to scale Monkey Mountain, and is a bit annoying. After a few minutes of dodging, climbing and getting knocked down by falling boulders, we found… nothing. Not even a nice view. Pah.*



## SURGICAL FARMING

*The old days of accidentally weeding or watering the wrong square are gone. Now you can lock your character so he moves sideways along a line of veggies, putting an end to all that wasted effort. It's the future of farming.*








## FIELD OF VISION

*Pressing Z cycles through three different viewing modes. On top of the basic one, you can opt to have the names of all the people and animals displayed at all times above their heads, as an aide mémoire. More importantly, you can see the playing area divided according to ownership, so you don't waste time digging somebody else's patch.*

**△ Wandering around somebody's house – RPG characters are rude.**




**△ Leon is always smug, despite being a girl with a boy's name.**

turned to stone in her grotto. Song notes can be found all over the place, and are basically your incentive to push the story along by making sure you sample all of the game's many activities.

which you played one resident in a vibrant, bustling village filled with characters, here you plough a lonelier furrow.

The playing area is pretty big, which may account for the relative

## "SONG OF HAPPINESS IS A JOYFUL THROWBACK TO THE HARVEST MOONS OF OLD"

Not that you'd want to miss anything out of choice, but sometimes there really aren't enough hours in a day.

*Song Of Happiness* is a joyful throwback to the Harvest Moons of old. Rather than follow the example of the epic *A Wonderful Life*, in

emptiness of Flower Bud Village, but there are definitely fewer people to interact with.

Bizarrely, given the wide, open space all around, the inhabited areas of the map are somewhat cramped and riddled with fences that force you to take a winding



## TOUR DE FORCE

*From mountain monkeys to the mysterious leviathan of the deep (okay, it's just a fat dolphin), here are a few of the most amazing creatures and juciest vegetables we've encountered during our time in Flower Bud Village. It's like some kind of crazy photo album.*











△ Get your tools upgraded here during the day. At night there isn't much to do, other than go fishing, as the village is a bit lacking in entertainment spots.







△ You can probably have a crack at Ann, if you're a ginger fan.




△ You don't have to walk home after a day out – simply warp there.




△ Welcome to our humble abode. It's bigger on the inside.

path around various properties. And the extreme closeness of the camera view means it's easy to lose your bearings, mere yards from your own front door.

You'll definitely be glad of the radar, which shows nearby houses and any characters who might be out and about. You can recognise your house as it's the one that looks like a garden shed. Actually, it probably is a garden shed.

But great things come from humble beginnings, and once you get into your stride the game expands to accomodate your burgeoning ambitions. In some of the previous versions, you could buy an extra plot of land when you ran out of space. In this one you can farm anywhere you like, as long as it isn't in somebody else's back garden. You could keep the animals close by and convert a pristine piece of forest into a turnip-filled vegetable wonderland, if the mood takes you. Have hoe, will travel.

Regarding the traditional *Harvest Moon* dating and mating shenanigans, marriage isn't the be-all and end-all it was in *A Wonderful Life* but you'll miss out on some romantic interludes if you don't at least make an effort. Of the characters you meet during the game, many are old favourites taken from previous versions, so there's a great opportunity for fans of the series to discover what might have been had they taken a different path on the N64 or SNES.

With a manga style reminiscent of that classic N64 version, it's quite a departure from the gorgeous *A Wonderful Life*. It's undoubtedly very nice to look at, but even if the landscape wasn't mostly flat, there would be no chance to admire it fully because there's no first-person view. All you can do is zoom in enough to make your farmer almost fill the screen, or zoom out so he only fills about a half of it.

Aside from camera woes, some great chunks of the plot completely passed us by, as there's a lot of kanji and no furigana (which means it was too hard for us to translate) but it's hardly the game's fault that we're not educated enough to understand it all.

An English version… Who knows? Is this why Revolution will be backwards compatible?

**MARTIN KITTS**



### FOR GIRLS

*Unlike previous versions, girl gamers can play as girl farmers and still take part in all the dating and marriage aspects. We didn't test it to see how many potential male partners there are, because that would have been a bit gay, but top marks to the developers for not simply releasing a 'for girls' version six months later.*



- Loads of gameplay refinements.
- Play as boy or girl.
- Looks adorable.



- The camera angle is too high and close.
- A bit daunting as a Japanese import.



### IF YOU LIKE THIS...

**Harvest Moon: A Wonderful Life**
**Ubi / Natsume / Marvelous**
**NGC/91, 91%**
**Beautiful, irresistible, tear-jerking farm-'em-up.**



### 7 VISUALS

Stylishly cute, even if the overhead camera is a bit confining.



### 6 SOUNDS

Animal noises, the odd bit of speech, and tinkly music.



### 8 MASTERY

Enough refinements to make it feel unlike the other HM titles.



### 8 LIFESPAN

Two characters and many possible endings (in Japanese).

## VERDICT

**A tricky import, but if you're a fan of the series, don't hold your breath waiting for the UK version. You'll die.**

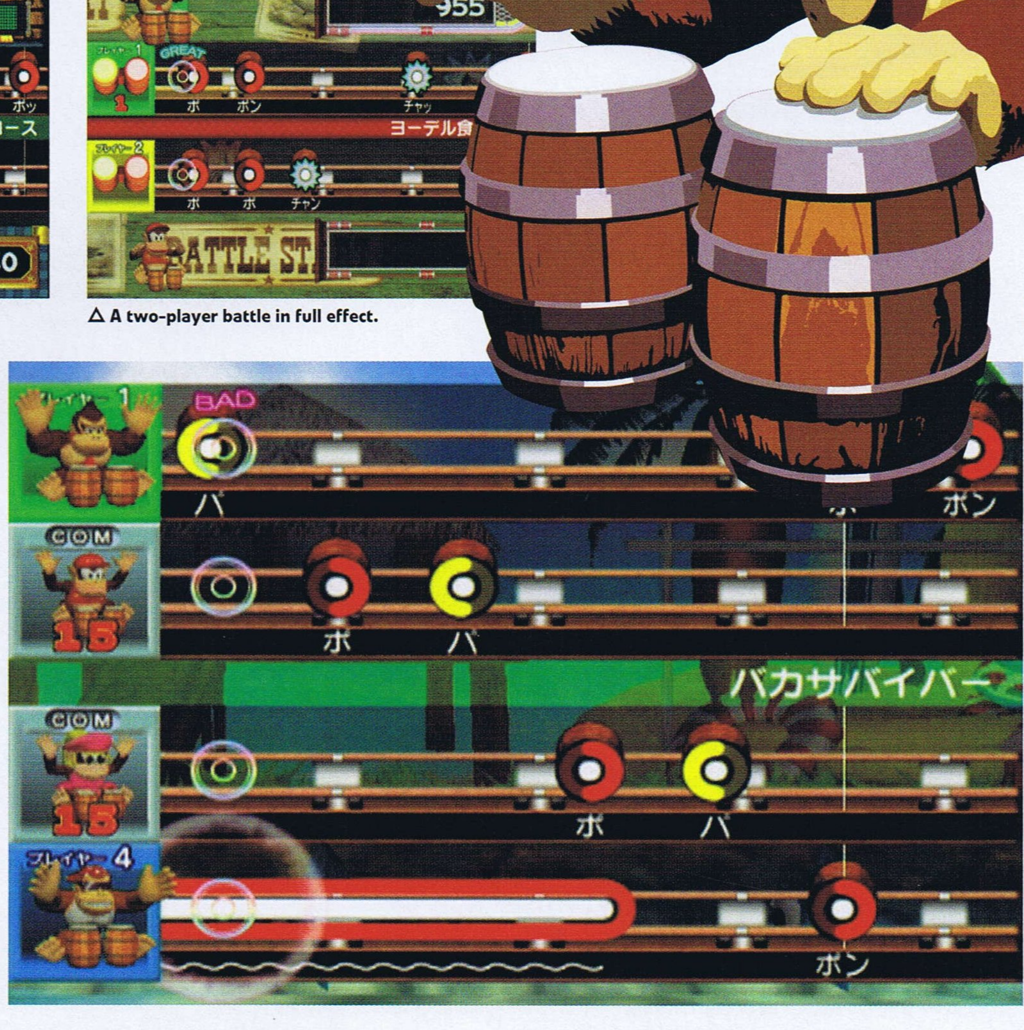


NGC 85

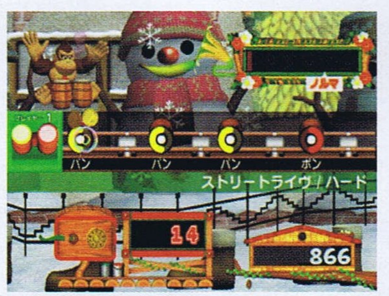
"Like an aerobics soundtrack for the under-fives"




△ Playing six in a row in the Challenge mode.




△ A two-player battle in full effect.




△ It's a lonely game for one player.




△ Yes, the plot involves the whole 'family'.

# DONKEY KONGA 3

## INFO BURST

| | |
|---|---|
| PUBLISHER | NINTENDO |
| DEVELOPER | NAMCO |
| RELEASE DATE | NOW (JAP) |
| PLAYERS | 1-4 |
| MEM. CARD PAGES | 5 |
| GBA LINK-UP | NO |
| SURROUND SOUND | NO |
| WIDESCREEN | NO |
| COST | ¥4,500 (£22) |




△ The rhythm banana tree.

**Out with the old** and in with 'Cha-La Head-Cha-La' and other anime favourites…

Still hungry for some incredibly Japanese bongo action? After the last instalment demonstrated the amazing greatness/awfulness* of synth-based J-pop, here's a fresh collection of more of the same *Donkey Konga* bongo-based action. Except this time there are even fewer songs that a Western audience might stand the remotest chance of recognising.

There are 50 tracks in total, and your first choices from the menu are likely to be things like the Bill & Ted-style Mozart remix, the funky version of La Cucaracha, and the small selection of game music (including, brilliantly, the eminently hummable Mona Pizza tune from the Japanese versions of *Wario Ware*). Then… erm…

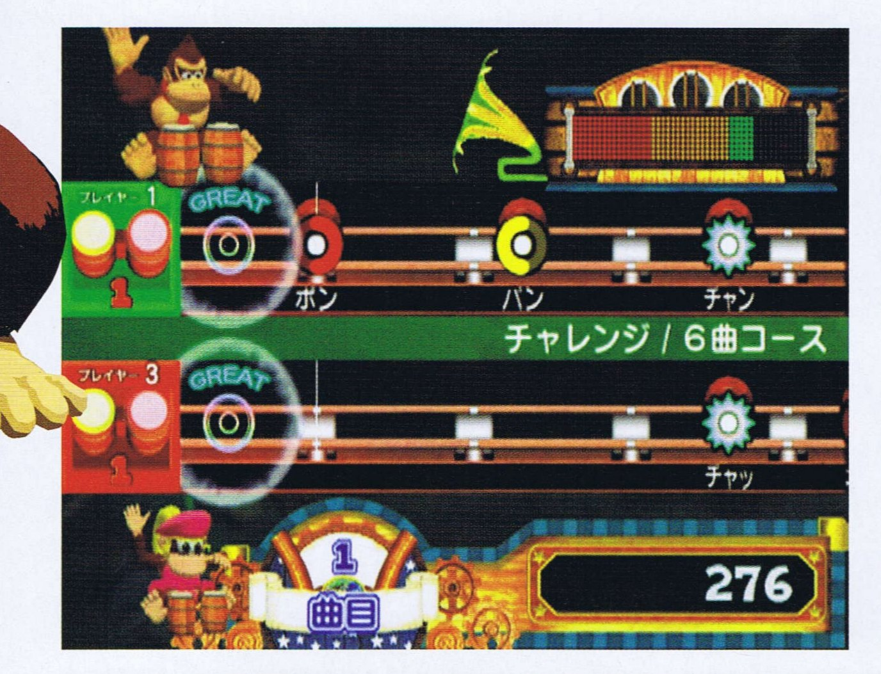
If you're well versed in the hyperactive pop frenzy of the theme tunes from Japanese cartoons such as Dragon Ball Z and Naruto, or the music from the *Fire Emblem* TV advert, you'll be right at home with the music collection on offer here. If not, you'll either learn to love songs which sound like an aerobics soundtrack for the under-fives, or you'll endure it for as long as it takes to unlock the 21 tunes from classic Nintendo and Namco Famicom titles.

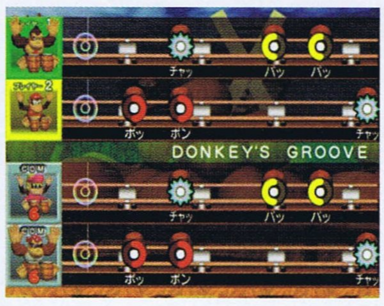
Anyway, while the music may be off-putting to many potential importers, there's no escaping the fact that *Donkey Konga* is never less than fantastic fun to play. And

*delete according to taste

# DONKEY KONGA 3

Monkey bongos, take three…









- 50 new songs.
- Guaranteed to break the ice at parties.



- Most of the songs are from cartoons watched by nobody outside of Japan.



**IF YOU LIKE THIS…**

**Donkey Konga**
**Nintendo**
**NGC/97 88%**
**If you're mad on drumming, the UK, US and Jap versions have different song lists.**



**SYNCHRO NOISE**

***See the little blue circles around certain notes? They get left behind for a moment after the note scrolls off the screen, awarding extra points for four-player accuracy.***






△ DK has every right to be pleased with that score.



△ J-poptastic songs.



△ Bonus get! Super!




△ He doesn't look too enthusiastic, does he?

almost everybody loves it – we can't think of a single other game that appeals to grans and toddlers, yet retains some degree of hardcore challenge.

The only significant gameplay difference between this and the second *Donkey Konga* is the addition of special synchronised notes, which everyone has to hit at exactly the same time to score extra points. Otherwise it's more or less identical – follow the music on the screen and hit the left bongo, right bongo, both bongos or clap your hands, according to the little coloured symbols that float past. It takes about five seconds to get the hang of it, and weeks to learn how to play some of the more difficult songs that call for some pretty incredible dexterity.



**AD LIB**

***As far as we were able to tell, the Ad Lib mode has no purpose other than to bore you to sleep while pictures of Diddy Kong and his mates float around on the screen. Music plays, and every time you hit the bongos, a picture pops up in a random position. That is all. If anyone has spent more than five minutes here, write and tell us why.***

It's possible to play alone and with an ordinary Gamecube joypad, but the game really comes to life when you've got four people sitting around the TV, thumping away on the special bongo controllers *Donkey Konga* was designed for. Each person gets a different part of the rhythm to play, and as long as nobody is so bad as to bongo completely out of sync with the others (which maybe rules out grans and toddlers, actually) it sounds almost like a proper percussion band playing in your living room. Playing obscure J-pop anime theme tunes.

If you bother playing for points rather than just for fun, you get the chance to shoot DK at a giant tree bearing 'rhythm bananas'. But if you're using a Freeloader disc, you won't be able to save your progress. Ever. Mind you, if this is your musical bag then you probably own a Japanese console anyway. Enjoy!

**"SOUNDS LIKE A PERCUSSION BAND PLAYING J-POP ANIME THEMES IN YOUR ROOM"**

**MARTIN KITTS**



**5 VISUALS**

You won't even notice the 3D backgrounds.



**8 SOUNDS**

The game themes are likely to be the only tracks you know.



**5 MASTERY**

Some more bonus games would have been nice.

**7 LIFESPAN**

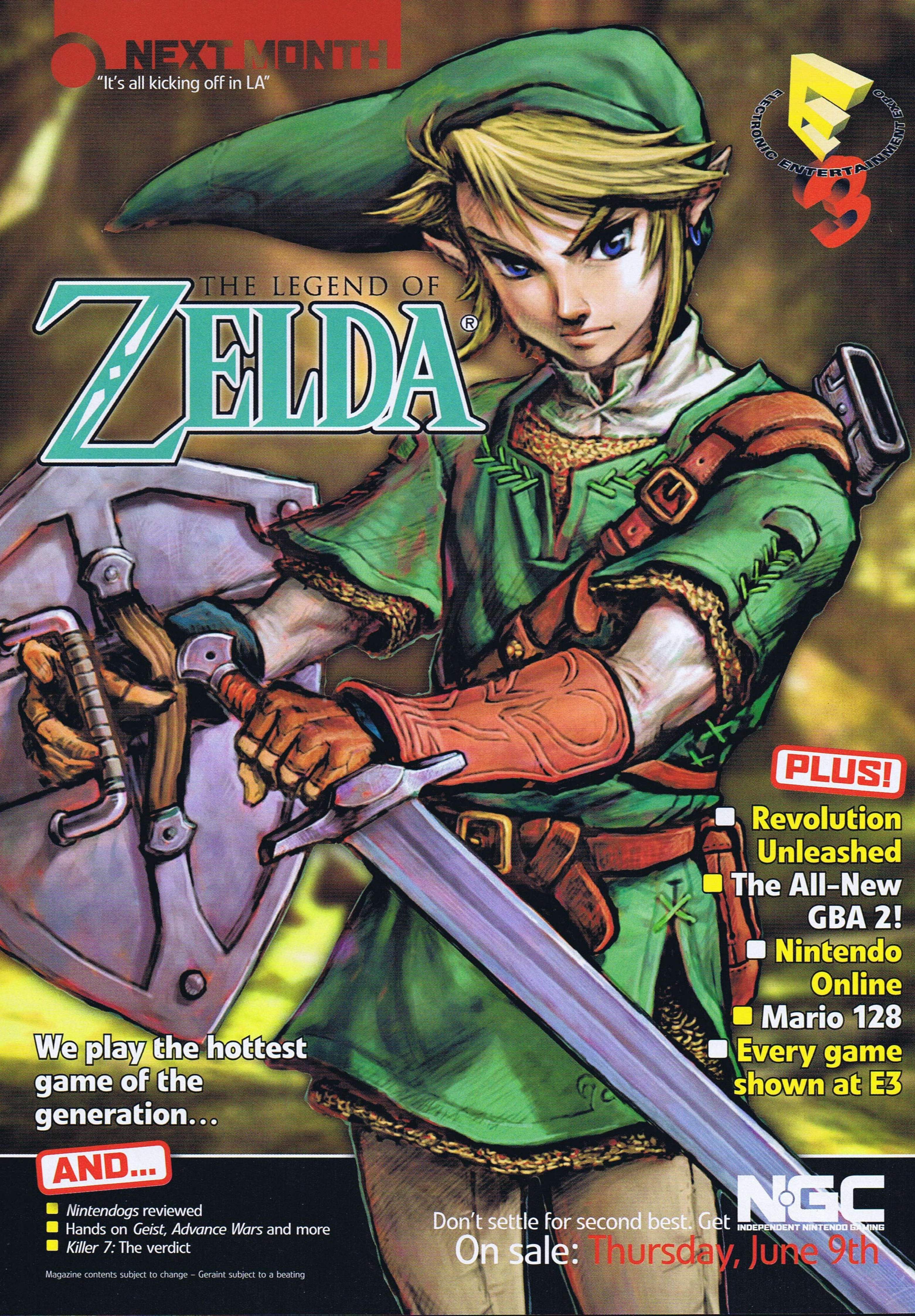
Always worth whipping out at your next J-pop house party.

**VERDICT**

**It says 'for Japan only' on the back of the box, and does it ever mean it? But you know you want more bongo fun, right?**



**NGC 80**


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Killer 7: The verdict
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ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF...

# UNSUNG HEROES

**Oh yes, Mario's a real old hotshot at that jumping thing.** But where would the lord of the dungarees be without his faceless helpers: the star, the hammer, the mushroom, the pipe? We'll tell you – tearfully watching the royal wedding of Princess Peach and Bowser on the telly, and hoping that being the 793rd Google search result for "24hr plumbers" will help him earn the cash for another bag of pasta and jar of Mushroom Ragu. So here's a four-page tribute to the *real* heroes of Nintendo games: the items that, despite flagrant touting of every law that nature, science and common sense hold dear, Mario just couldn't be Super without.

## THE STAR

### DISTINGUISHING FEATURE

So pretty and shiny.

### NOTABLE APPEARANCE

The Star lends the gift of invincibility to 8th-position lame-o-racers in *Super Mario Kart*, thereby ensuring that hard-earned driving expertise counts for *absolutely nothing*.

### THE HISTORY

Flashy enough to have its own theme tune (probably not entitled "De De De DeDe De DeDiddleDe"), the Star has graduated from humble collectible in *Super Mario Bros.* to the shape that powers an entire kingdom in games like *Mario 64* – ostensibly through the magic of spinning around a bit and having happy eyes.

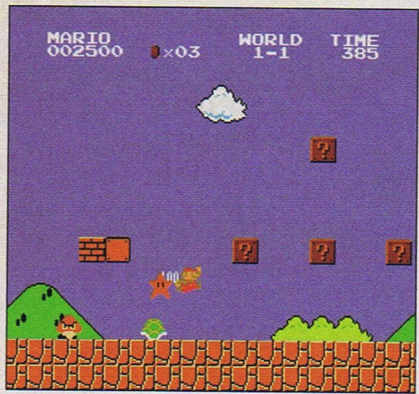



*Fig.1:* The initial 'humble' appearance of Star, *c.*1983

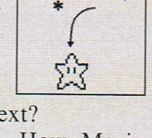
### THE MAKEOVERS

Originally as flat as a graphline measuring the sex appeal of Luigi's moustache, Starman – for that is its real name – has fattened up on a diet of Dimension Three, and is now so desperate to *be* Mario that it's wearing a fake moustache for games like *Paper Mario* and *Mario Party*. Or perhaps it's trying to disguise itself after endorsing the rampant rubbishness of Nintendo of Europe's Stars Catalogue – its blank featureless face on the Nintendo homepage suggests it gouged its own eyes out in shame.



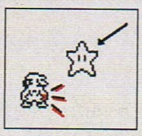
*Fig.2:* The Star as an object of desire, *c.*2003

### THREE THINGS THAT DON'T QUITE ADD UP



**1.** It's a star. What's it doing bouncing around at ground level? Get back up in the sky and restore the celestial order, you wastrel. Will the moon be shopping at Sainsbury's next?

**2.** It really should hurt. How Mario avoids cutting his Michael Jackson gloves to shreds on those five sharp points is a mystery. And as for what happens when he stuffs one in his pocket.... brrr.





**3.** It can't stop. Endlessly spinny little fella that he is, Starman should be teaching science the secret of perpetual motion – not trying to beat its own record for getting kidnapped by Bowser.

### REAL HERO POTENTIAL

Poor Starman. Gaze over to Japan and you'll see a very similar character – named Stafi – stealing all the glory in his very own series of Game Boy games. He's even got a mouth *and cheeks*, making him look even more murderously cute than our shimmering friend. It's like he's everything Starman could have been... It really would have Starman muttering and blazing red with envy. If he had a mouth, or cheeks.




*Fig.3:* Stafi, brazen imposter

### MOST LIKELY TO

Make the kind of ethereal twinkling noise that only really magical golden things make.

### MOST LIKELY TO

Go retrogade in Uranus, meaning love is very much in the air around the 15th.

## THE MUSHROOM

### DISTINGUISHING FEATURE

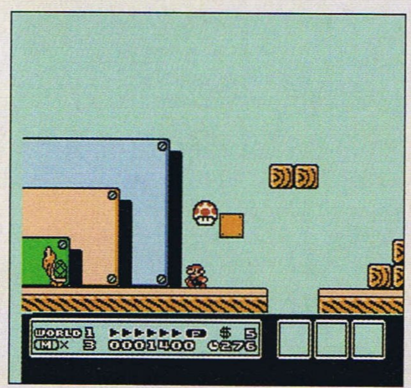
The chewy, moist taste of nothingness. Notable appearance: Emerging from a block in the original *Super Mario Bros* and happily turning Mario 'Super' for the first time. After it had given up running for its tiny life.

### THE HISTORY

Best eaten raw, this fungus is all it takes to make some fat plumber think he's superer than the rest of us. The idea's clearly stolen from Alice in Wonderland, but the unholy union between man and mushroom that presumably spawned the supremely punchable Toad – that's all Shigsy's idea, that is.

### THE MAKEOVERS

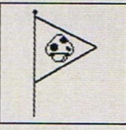
Originally brown and yellow, the mushroom has since been transformed into a red-and-white wonder by the fickle Miyamoto – those are the colours


*Fig.4:* Lesser-spotted toadstool (anti-gravity variety)

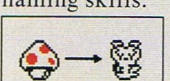
that represent nature's polite way of saying, "Eat me and die". And what about the evil, irritating, poisonous, purple mushrooms that briefly existed to re-shrink Mario in *Super Mario Bros: The Lost Levels?* You're about as likely to see them again as a Nintendo game starring the dismembered head of Shigeru Miyamoto. Living in a fishtank.


*Fig.5:* Mushroom-induced hallucination

### THREE THINGS THAT DON'T QUITE ADD UP



1. The kingdom's named after it. Koopa Kingdom, we could accept, or Kingdom Of The Weird Walking Turds They Call Goombas. But Mushroom? David and Victoria Beckham have better naming skills.

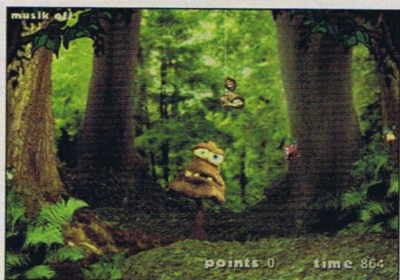


**2.** The colours ain't right. As mentioned above, red and white *should* be poisonous. But then a game about a man rolling around on the ground and groaning might not have made millions.



**3.** It's the only food in town. Forget 59p school dinners – Peach and co. are stuck with mushrooms for breakfast, dinner and tea. No wonder Mario didn't exactly hurry to the castle for that *Mario 64* cake.

### REAL HERO POTENTIAL
The only toadstool hero we can track down is 'Butch Mushroom', grotesque wasp-eating star of a terrible free online game and the reason why we're actually quite relieved Miyamoto's mushroom has no aspirations beyond swimming around in Mario's digestive juices. Still, perhaps our fungal friend would prefer to be free of Mario and living in on a free-range mushroom farm. Or is that just chickens?


*Fig.6:* Poisonous mushroom (internet variety)

### MOST LIKELY TO
Make Mario feel a bit ill as he watches the mushroom's panicked eyes dart left and right during the eating process.

### LEAST LIKELY TO
Get baked into a pie by Jamie Oliver – do you think he'd risk his fat tongue actually getting *bigger?*

# THE ITEM BLOCK

### DISTINGUISHING FEATURES
None, unless you count slightly rounded edges as 'distinguishing'.

### HIGH POINT
The watershed moment in *Super Mario World* where the question mark variety was joined by an exclamation mark version – in *three different colours.* Crazy days.

### THE HISTORY
It's got just one job - keep hold of coins, mushrooms and other assorted gifts. But all it takes is a fat plumber to come bouncing its way, and the Item Block is spilling its guts like a broken piñata. Although Mr Block *is* good at making Mario rub his dented head and wish Miyamoto would let him get his hands on coins by kissing pretty ladies or stroking hamsters.

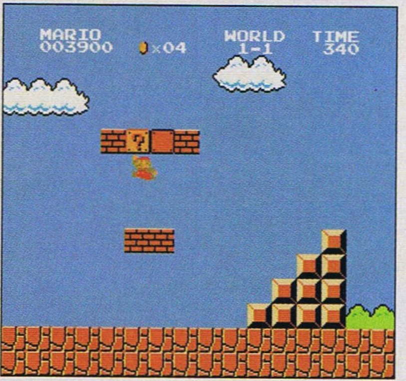
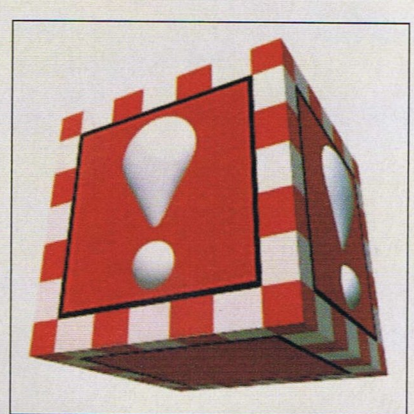


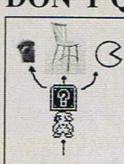
*Fig.7:* Item Block in 'action'

### THE MAKEOVERS
It's red and yellow now instead of brown. It used to flash, now it doesn't. The story of the Item Block wouldn't rival The Da Vinci Code, clearly. Although it has been three-dimensional since 1996, helping elucidate how a bi-dimensional structure restricted to a single

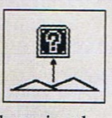

*Fig.8:* Close-up view of Item Block in 'action'

morphological plane could be affected by a bloke in baby clothes smacking against it with his head.

### THREE THINGS THAT DON'T QUITE ADD UP



**1.** It's misleadingly labelled. Shove a question mark on a box and we'd expect to see something truly random pop out, like a three-piece suite or the pianist from Keane. No such luck.



**2.** It defies gravity. NASA would love to know how blocks float in Mario's world. David Blaine needed a crane to keep his box in the air, and he didn't have a part-time plumber bashing its bum.



**3.** It's guarded by Goombas. Those tiny guys do a great job of guarding something that's

OXFORD ENGLISH MARIOPAEDIA

floating at least six feet above them – especially because mistimed jumps just end up squashing them.

### REAL HERO POTENTIAL

Beneath that bland cubular exterior, there's probably an all-action videogame hero waiting to get out. Oh no, wait – it's just another mushroom. The Item Block looks on with jealousy at the *Tetris* block, A-list celebrity of bricks and brazen follower of the idea that moving around a bit isn't a bad idea. Item Block also hates DJ Brandon Block, and any brick that's part of a famous building – especially the cocky brown git five feet up the west side of the Sistine Chapel.



*Fig.9:* Celebrity blocks

### MOST LIKELY TO

Do absolutely nothing.

### LEAST LIKELY TO

Mount an aggressive takeover of a Nasdaq-listed company and proactively raise its profit forecasts by 37%.

# THE HAMMER

### DISTINGUISHING FEATURE

Really hurts.

### NOTABLE APPEARANCE

Making the dreams of a million parents come true by being used to smash Pikachu over the head in *Super Smash Bros Melée*.

### THE HISTORY

Since Mario first used a hammer in *Donkey Kong* (just the kind of wooden hammer you see lying around a building site constructed of metal girders), it has helped him squash Goombas, Koopas, activate switches and keep Luigi from getting ideas above his station. You might think it's an odd tool for a plumber, but Mario actually started life as a carpenter – it was either a hammer or a Black & Decker Jigsaw, which would have tainted Nintendo's family image somewhat.

### THE MAKEOVERS

The Hammer's changed little for recent games like *Paper Mario* and *Mario & Luigi* – Nintendo's ever-inventive musical engineers have even kept its original theme tune (probably not entitled "De DeDiddleDe De De De De") for *Super Smash Bros Melée*. The hammer breaks in two with alarming regularity these days, though we like to think this is wishful thinking on the part of Kirby – who's irritating rock-stomping and floating abilities regularly attract the attention of frustrated gamers, sick to the back teeth with his relentless, cheap-ass tactics.

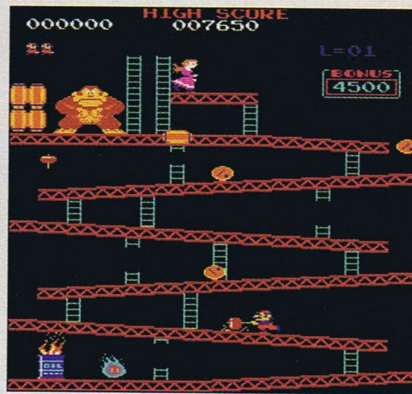
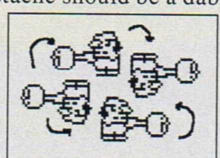


*Fig.10:* The value of good wooden hammer

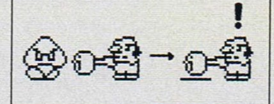

*Fig.11:* Floating rubber hammer

### THREE THINGS THAT DON'T QUITE ADD UP

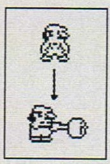
**1.** Mario's rubbish with it. After 20 years old Mr Moustache should be a dab hand with the hammer – but he still spins completely out of control, making him a nightmare come DIY weekend in Peach's house.



**2.** Its quality varies. In *Mario & Luigi*, it knocks one point of damage off a defenseless Goomba. In 1980, it was able to *crush flaming metal barrels*. We're sure Walkers Crisps used to be better, as well.



**3.** Where does it come from? Mario and Luigi have taken to simply whipping the hammer out of a hidden pocket. That's a very neat trick we'd like to learn for hiding live horses from customs.



### REAL HERO POTENTIAL

The Hammer has probably reached the pinnacle of tool-based celebrity – with superhero powers limited to, say, mending a wonky table, it's no surprise that there has rarely been one hammer as well known as Mario's. Although we have got proof of a DJ called "Mario Hammer", responsible for albums such as 2000's seminal "Herbststurm". But then he can walk and talk.



*Fig.12:* Evidence of a musical disc

### MOST LIKELY TO

Have the Goomba population wondering why, in 20 years, no-one's thought of just staying in bed?

### LEAST LIKELY TO

Make Mario's customers very happy when he demands payment after simply smashing their pipes to pieces.

# THE COIN

### DISTINGUISHING FEATURE

Almost as worthless as the Slovenian Tolar (351 to the pound)

### NOTABLE APPEARANCE

Making us almost faint with greed and dribble, "Coins... coins!" by briefly filling an *entire room* in *Super Mario World*.

### THE HISTORY

Steadfastly rejecting the Euro, the Mushroom Kingdom has 'Coin'. Scattered liberally around every game and ignored by enemies (who'd probably just waste all that cash on, say, clothes), it has an irritating tendency to get stuck or lost in hard-to-reach places. Just like real coins – although in the real world you'd be unlikely to lose a yellow disc the size of a large chicken down the back of a sofa.

### THE MAKEOVERS

Originally available only in bland

OXFORD ENGLISH MARIOPAEDIA

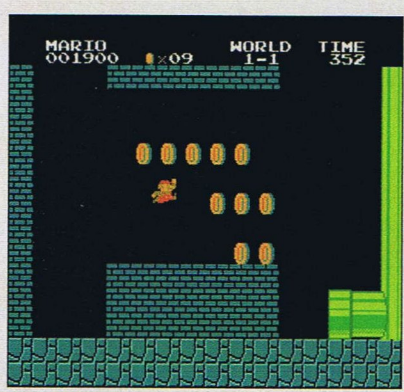


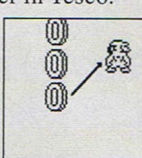
*Fig.13:* The money shot

yellow, it's since graduated to higher-value blue and red denominations – so yellow is now the one the bureau de change won't change back after your holiday. The coin had a square on its face to start with, later replaced by a star, and, in *Super Mario World*, Yoshi's face. The only reason we can think of for this is a gradual improvement of Miyamoto's artistic skills. The next one will have a crude drawing of his naked wife.

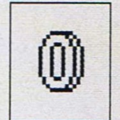

*Fig.14:* No brass in pocket

### THREE THINGS THAT DON'T QUITE ADD UP

**1.** They're everywhere. Why's Bowser stuffing princesses into his rucksack when he could be *buying* power? Albeit by counting out the coins like an OAP at the bread counter in Tesco.



**2.** They're tax-free. Theoretically, every third coin should go to Princess Peach, for redistribution to the kingdom's poorest citizens. Which, given the dungarees, is Mario.



**3.** They don't have eyes. In a world where even hills and clouds can't help but stare, the coin is faceless. Perhaps it's facing the wrong way. In which case, what body part does the star on the front represent?

### REAL HERO POTENTIAL:

History isn't exactly littered with famous coins, admittedly – although we did find a game on the internet with a hero called 'Colin The Coin'. On that note, we imagine Mario's Coin has dreams of embarking on a thrilling platform-based adventure, running and jumping and grabbing tiny Marios that yelp 'Wahoo!' as they're collected. But then we have been losing a lot of sleep lately.

### MOST LIKELY TO

Be handed to you as change by a devious market stall owner, along with a small metal ring and an Italian coin worth 1/57th of 1p.

### LEAST LIKELY TO

Actually fit into your wallet.

## THE PIPE

### DISTINGUISHING FEATURE

Unnervingly green

### HIGH POINT

The 'Welcome to Warp Zone!' moment in *Super Mario Bros*, where Mario happily showed kids the value of cheating their way through life.

### THE HISTORY

That accursed Mushroom Kingdom! As if magic clouds and smiling hills aren't enough, its pipes are shiny and clean and the pathway to magical caves of untold riches – as opposed to the calcium-caked disease-tubes of our stinking world of humans. Nice and fat, too, so Mario doesn't get stuck mid-slide, like a rat in a hoover.

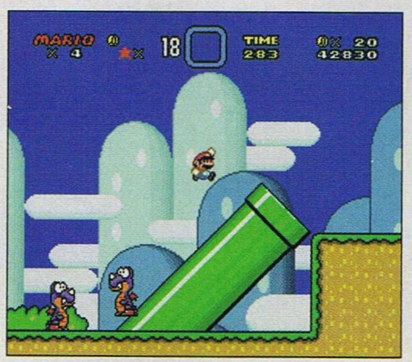


*Fig.15:* Rare sighting of a diagonal pipe

### THE MAKEOVERS

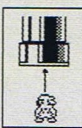
Originally home to death-spitting Piranha Plants – the ultimate result of skimping on the Calgon tablets, perhaps – the pipe has always been the shiniest fixture of The Mushroom Kingdom. But, even for its most recent appearance in *Mario Kart Double Dash*, the inner workings of The Pipe are shrouded in inky blackness if you try to look inside. Presumably so a plumber can come along, breathe



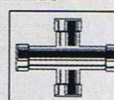
*Fig.16:* Hexagonal pipe innovation

through his teeth and charge you £700 for some suspiciously quick work.

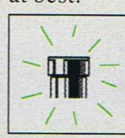
### THREE THINGS THAT DON'T QUITE ADD UP



**1.** Vertical travel is possible. How does Mario travel *upwards* through a pipe? Moving against gravity is tough at the best of times, without having to claw at freshly-polished metal with pasta-hands.



**2.** It's not connected to anything. Probably for the best – the attraction of a game starring a man swimming through several metric tonnes of raw effluent is questionable at best.



**3.** It's green. Blends in quite nicely with the grass and all that, but if you're trying to hide a secret room full of money, painting the entrance a colour that glows in the dark isn't necessarily the best way to do it.

### REAL HERO POTENTIAL

Back in the day, there was a popular videogame called *Pipemania*, which worked like a giant jigsaw puzzle – shuffle bits of pipe to aid the flow of some indistinguishable goop. But celebrity will always elude the Mario pipe, thanks in part to intimacy issues – as soon as someone gets too close, they're instantly transported to another room hundreds of miles away.

### MOST LIKELY TO

Go 'bleauh, bleauh, bleauh' when someone slides inside, just to show off.

### LEAST LIKELY TO

Have Mario emerge from the U-bend of someone's toilet in the real world.

# EXTENDED PLAY




A Flag guide for...

# STARFOX ASSAULT

**Bored with the on-foot missions?** Why not alleviate the dullness with some flags?



There are a total of 50 special flags hidden throughout *StarFox: Assault*'s Story mode, with five flags located in each level. If you can find all fifty of them, you'll unlock the Demon Sniper for use in the multiplayer game.

For the game to register that all five flags have been collected in a given stage, you must grab them all in a single run, so there's no going back. The numerical tags listed below are more of a matter of organizational convenience; they needn't be collected in this precise order, save in on-rails stages like mission one.

Given the other tasks you have in each level, you may want to dedicate a few dry runs in the Bronze level exclusively to flag collection. In time-sensitive stages like six and eight, you'll usually be too busy to go exploring.

On many stages, the flags are hidden behind invisible targets. You'll be able to detect this with your weapon's autolock system; if a targeting circle appears in thin air, you've just found a flag. Blast the target to reveal it.

## WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

***If you're still getting over the fact that StarFox: Assault didn't quite live up to your expectations, this is something to take your mind off it – a guide to the locations of all 50 hidden flags in the game. Once you've collected them all you'll unlock Sniper Fox in the VS multiplayer mode.***



## WHAT WE SAID IN ISSUE 105

*Surely all Namco would have to do is look at Nintendo's previous efforts and give them a lick of paint. With Nintendo looking over their shoulder, what could go wrong? Quite a lot by the looks of things.*



## MISSION ONE: TAKE OUT OIKONNY

You'll only have one chance to get these flags, and two are hidden…



**FLAG #1:**
Blast the nodule on the last capital ship, to the right of its purple weak spot. Falco will stop by to give you a bomb shortly beforehand.

**FLAG #2:**
When you get to the planet's surface, you'll pass beneath a stone archway. Once you're clear of it, break left to find a small hidden passageway. If you destroy both the tank and mech, the mech will drop the flag.



**FLAG #3:**
As you enter the forest, blast the left branch off the giant tree in the middle of the path.

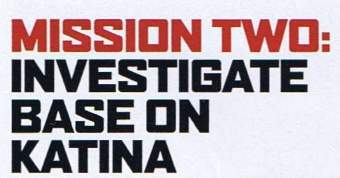



**FLAG #4:**
There's a suspended train track in the enemy base. When you get near the end of it, hug the ground and veer left to the other side of its support columns. You'll find a hidden storage barrel, which contains the flag.



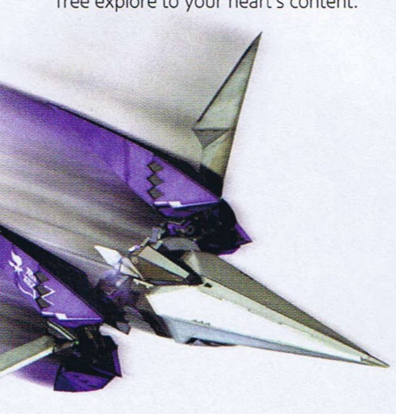
**FLAG #5:**
As you approach the final battery of robots, climb and look at the ledges to your right. The final flag's inside one of the barrels.





## MISSION TWO: INVESTIGATE BASE ON KATINA

You'll want to use your Landmaster as often as possible for the protection and firepower it affords. There's no time limit on this level, so feel free explore to your heart's content.





**FLAG #1:**
One of the small cylindrical buildings in the base is on fire. The flag target is in the building next to that one.



**FLAG #2:**
Close by, you'll find a large door which you can blast open with the Landmaster's cannon.



**FLAG #3:**
A similar store room can be found on the west side of the base. The flag target is between the two blue blocks.



**FLAG #4:**
Use the Landmaster's hover function to get onto the roof of the central facility. The flag target is on its northern spire.



**FLAG #5:**
The central building has a massive cannon on its east end. You'll find a tiny alcove underneath the said cannon, with a flag target inside.

## MISSION THREE: TAKE CONTROL OF THE HIDEOUT

This one's a bit dicey. It can be hard to get all the flags *and* accomplish your goals in the time you're given, especially if you don't know where you're going. You can buy yourself some time by destroying enemies outside the base in your Arwing.




**FLAG #1:**
Turn left from your starting position. There's a turret set up to guard an empty doorway, which in turn is hiding a flag target.




**FLAG #2:**
Head southeast from your Arwing and go up the ramp. You'll find a transfer device with a computer nearby. You'll find the flag target just above the computer.

**FLAG #3:**
On the second floor, there's a yellow crate on a platform in the centre, near the lift. Destroy the crate with a fully-charged blaster shot. The flag's inside.



**FLAG #4:**
Capture the lift and head up to the second floor. There's a monitor screen in the same room as one of the transfer devices with a small ledge underneath it. The target is on that ledge.




**FLAG #5:**
Head due east from the base in your Arwing until you encounter an enemy turret set up on an asteroid. The flag is inside that turret.

## MISSION FOUR: RECAPTURE THE CLIMATE CONTROL TOWER

Like mission two, time's on your side. Unlike mission two, there are quite a few aliens running around, many of whom are immune to blaster fire. Take it slowly until you get your hands on an H. Launcher.



**FLAG #1:**
You'll find a large grey stone tower in the southwest corner of the map, relatively close to your starting point. The flag target you need is at the tower's base.



**FLAG #2:**
Look for an ice bridge near the western shield generator. There's a flag target at the top of one of the beacons on its west end.




**FLAG #3:**
There's a tunnel at the base of the cliffs near the southeastern shield generator. As you're sliding through it, watch out for the third flag target.






**FLAG #4:**
This is a bit hard to find as there aren't many decent landmarks. It's on the northeast side of the map, by a small crystal spur on one of the cliffs. If you're sliding around on the ice, you're too low.




**FLAG #5:**
The target's above the west entrance to the climate control centre. The Landmaster is the best craft to use for this one.

## MISSION FIVE: HUNT DOWN PIGMA

This is another on-rails shooter like mission one. Unfortunately, one of its quirks is that a couple of the flags will only show up when you destroy specific enemies. The enemies in question are little purple jittery things that fire green globs of plasma at you. Obliterate them whenever they appear if you hope to grab the flag.

**FLAG #1:**
Shortly after you disable the Aparoid capital ship at the beginning of the stage, you'll encounter the purple jitterers. The individual carrying the flag is at the top of their formation, and may initially be off-screen.

**FLAG #2:**
Destroy as many of the possessed asteroids as you can and one of them will drop a flag. The specific asteroid is near the end of the swarm, towards the top of the screen.




**FLAG #4:**
Immediately after you destroy the prototype, you'll be assaulted by another mob of jitterers. Again, destroy them all and one will drop the flag.




**FLAG #5:**
As you enter the ship's interior, you'll fly into a battery of ground turrets. As you're dealing with them, look for another of those piles of purple goo amidst them. It's marking the last flag target.

## MISSION SIX: LIBERATE SAURIA

As with mission three, you'll need to hop in and out of your Arwing during this stage to rescue wingmen and to keep the aerial enemies at a manageable level.




**FLAG #1:**
Look at the base of the waterfall on the southwestern part of the map.




**FLAG #2:**
Check out the ground floor of the southern temple. There's a small indentation in the centre of the room, in which there's a flag target.




**FLAG #3:**
It's at the top of a broken pillar, near the small building east of the southern temple.




**FLAG #4:**
Check the roof of the northeastern temple, on the raised platform in its northeastern corner.






**FLAG #5:**
This is one of the trickier flags to find. It's behind the locked door in the caverns underneath the northeastern temple. You'll have to leave the caverns and circle around the cliffs, looking out for a new entrance that'll take you to the tunnel on the other side of the door.

## MISSION SEVEN: RECAPTURE THE CORNERIAN CAPITAL

This is largely a running gun battle. Use your sniper rifle to pacify a location before you go hunting for flags.






**FLAG #1:**
Look for the Lunastone Hotel, near your starting point. As you head up the ramp to the roof, the target's right in front of you.



**FLAG #2:**
There's a small building shaped like a T, directly southwest of the central dome. The flag target is on the northern edge of its roof.



**FLAG #3:**
There are four red buildings in the northeast corner of the city. Go there, climb to the rooftops, and look for the flag target by the northwest building's smokestack.



**FLAG #4:**
Head to the Ward Offices building, northwest of the central dome. The target is on its roof; head up there using the access ramp, then walk along the narrow path that's at the back of the building.



**FLAG #5:**
After you destroy all the jammers, Peppy will drop Fox's Arwing onto the roof of Persimmon's. The flag target is at the base of the staircase that leads from its second landing to its roof. If you're facing the stairs, turn right and you should see it.

## MISSION EIGHT: PROTECT THE GATE

This may be the hardest mission for flag-collectors because of its strict time limit. Try to grab as many flags as possible at the start of the mission, before the missiles appear.

**FLAG #1:**
You'll find a flag target on the bottom spoke of the Orbital Gate.



**FLAG #2:**
Destroy the immobile enemy that's directly beneath the station.




**FLAG #4:**
This one's on top of the fulcrum of the station's central revolving spoke. As you exit the tunnel where you found #3, you're pointing right at it.




**FLAG #3:**
Fly around and come at the station from below, heading north. You'll see a small open gate on its underbelly, the flag target is inside.



**FLAG #5:**
Find the highest spire on the station's west side, it's atop the small ledge at the end.



## MISSION NINE: STORM THE APAROID HOMEWORLD

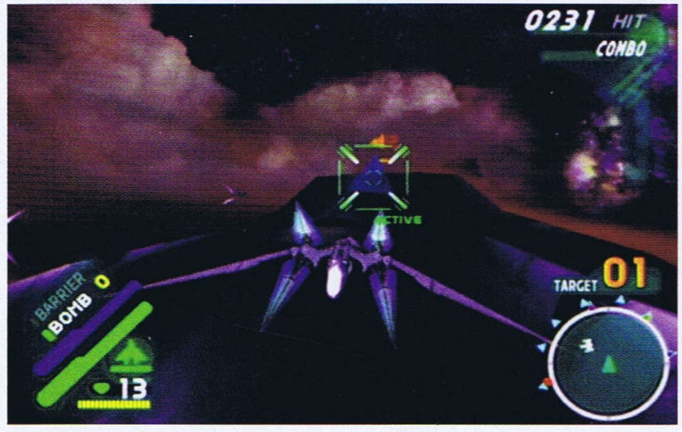
Use your Arwing to help you get to the last two flags. Otherwise, you'll have to navigate a few tricky jumps and turns to get to where you're going.




**FLAG #1:**
Head southeast from your starting position and you'll come to a closed door being guarded by a pair of turrets. Walk around that room, through the small hallway that twists around it, and you'll find the flag target directly behind the door.




**FLAG #2:**
The southeastern hatcher is at the bottom of a room that contains several floors, guarded by a small army of aliens. As you fight your way to the lowest floor, you'll find the flag target behind the last ramp.




**FLAG #3:**
Hop into your Arwing and fly up to the top of the dome in the centre of the level. You should spot the flag target without much trouble.




**FLAG #4:**
There's a large field of green plasma in the northeastern corner of the map. It's easiest to get here in the Arwing, and you can spot and nail the flag target while on the fly.







**FLAG #5:**
In the southwest corner of the map, there's a small compound accessible via laser bridge. If you enter, you'll find a trap on its lowest floor. After you dispatch your Aparoid assailants, look for a flag target inside an alcove.

## MISSION TEN: DEFEAT THE APAROID QUEEN

You don't have a lot of margin for error here. Getting all five flags will take a lot of practice.



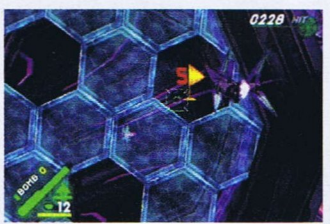

**FLAG #1:**
Early in the stage, you'll run into this thing. The flag target's directly in front of its eye.




**FLAG #2:**
Shortly afterwards, you'll encounter a trio of cannons mounted on the top, bottom, and right-hand side of the tunnel. There's a flag target hidden among them, in the space where a fourth turret could be.




**FLAG #4:**
There's a single turret near the entrance to the corridor of spinning blades. The penultimate flag is inside.




**FLAG #3:**
After your bout with the stage's tenacious mini-boss, another hexagonal shield will spring up in your way, leaving three holes for you to fly through. One of those holes, the one on the top right, is hiding a flag target.




**FLAG #5:**
Finally, as you approach the boss, you'll enter a long tunnel full of enemies that resemble spinning eyes. One of them is carrying the final flag. Use your charge shot and bombs to destroy as many of them as possible; the enemy with the flag usually appears in the upper right corner of the screen.

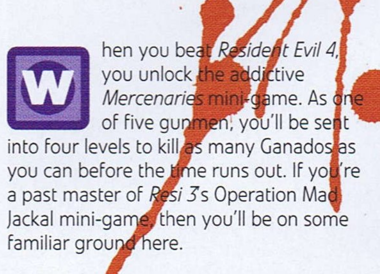





# RESIDENT EVIL 4 MERCENARIES MASTERCLASS

**The clock's ticking, you're low on health and ammo and you're surrounded. What do you do?**

PART 3



When you beat *Resident Evil 4*, you unlock the addictive *Mercenaries* mini-game. As one of five gunmen, you'll be sent into four levels to kill as many Ganados as you can before the time runs out. If you're a past master of *Resi 3*'s Operation Mad Jackal mini-game, then you'll be on some familiar ground here.



## WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

*This is the third part and final part of our expansive* Resident Evil 4 *guide. We've been through tactics and all the hardest parts of the game, so this month we focus on the* Mercenaries *mini-game, which is unlocked when you complete the game.*




## WHAT WE SAID IN ISSUE 104!

*The complete package easily matches Gamecube's top tier of games. It's as well produced as* Wind Waker *and* Metroid Prime *– and stands alongside both of them as the finest examples of entertainment the Gamecube can provide.*






# THE BASICS

In each stage of *Mercenaries*, you'll be dropped into a small, inescapable battlefield with a small army of enemies to keep you occupied. The goal is to stay alive until time runs out, despite the teeming hordes of Ganados who're sharing the space with you. When the clock hits zero, you'll be evacuated via helicopter.

At the end of the stage, you'll be given a ranking based upon your score. To get four stars, you need 40,000 points; to earn five stars, score 60,000 points or more. Getting a four-star ranking on any stage will unlock that stage's secret character, and if you can get five stars on each stage with all characters, you'll unlock the powerful Handcannon (a hand gun with the explosive force of a rocket launcher) which will become available in *Resident Evil 4*'s story mode.

You begin each stage with two minutes on the clock. To get more time (and therefore more points), grab the shining yellow hourglasses scattered about the stage. The locations of these are marked on your map.

You can also find three treasure chests in each level, which contain valuable score multipliers. When you pick one of these up, you'll get an extra thousand points for every Ganado you kill in the next thirty seconds, above and beyond whatever you might get for a combo. Using a score multiplier at the right time is the key to scoring serious points.










# COMBOS

Your opponents in *Mercenaries* are the various types of Ganados and Illuminados, occasionally reinforced by more powerful foes. A standard Ganado is worth 300 points, while a prisoner, Bella Sister, Leatherface, or J.J. is worth 5000.

The key to high scores is more than just building a body count. To get five stars, you have to score high combos by killing off multiple Ganados in a row. There's a certain rhythm to it; after a little practice, you'll start to get a sense for when to drop a Ganado for maximum efficiency.

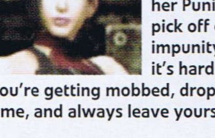
Try to stagger your kills; save wounded Ganados for combo fodder. Also, don't simply burn through targets as fast as you can hammer A. Instead, wait for the combo meter to start flashing. This way, you can stretch out your combos for as long as possible, which gives fresh Ganados time to show up.

# THE CHARACTERS



## LEON

Leon's underpowered compared to the others. His Riot Gun enables you to mow down entire crowds, but he lacks the offensive punch you need to drop more powerful opponents. Don't ignore his Blacktail, either, as it's surprisingly potent, and his only option at long range.

## ADA

Ada works best as a sniper. With her Punisher and rifle, you can pick off enemies with relative impunity, but if she gets cornered, it's hard for her to get back out. If you're getting mobbed, drop incendiaries to buy some time, and always leave yourself an escape route.



## KRAUSER

It takes some practice before Krauser's strengths become obvious. One swat from his arm will instantly liquify anything, including prisoners or Leatherface, and his Bow is often a one-hit killer. Use his flash grenades to set up his double kick or arm slash.

It's worth mentioning that Krauser is the only character besides Leon who has a knife. The other characters aren't so lucky and must resort to gunfire to break open crates or barrels. Krauser's knife is a bit more powerful than Leon's, but as with everything else about Krauser, it's a bit slower.



## HUNK

His TMP's weak and burns ammo like crazy, but if you pair headshots with his Neckbreaker melée move, you can drop Ganados in one hit. Against other opponents, you'll need to master the fine art of grenade tossing to ground an enemy before blowing several dozen holes in them with the TMP.



## WESKER

It's relatively easy to rack up big points and massive combos with Wesker, but it's even easier to run out of ammunition. Use the hand grenades and make sure that you stock up on bullets and ammo, then you need to find a quiet place from which to play sniper. His melée attacks are uncommonly vicious.

# THE STAGES









## VILLAGE

This is basically chapter 1-1 with the difficulty turned up to eleven and although the Village starts off easy, it will get remarkably difficult. After you've killed a few villagers, the Bella Sisters will enter the field of play. At any given time, there can be as many as four coming after you, which easily turns any blind corner into a deathtrap.

There's a barn in the Village's northwest corner with a score multiplier in its loft. That loft is also one of the few relatively safe places in the entire village. You can score big points by luring your pursuers into the barn, grabbing the score multiplier and nailing them all at once with a couple of hand grenades or an explosive barrel.

There's a hand grenade at the top of the watchtower. This is also a good place to wait for the clock to run down, as the Ganados won't pursue you up the ladder and won't toss firebombs.

Another useful area you can use as a bottleneck is the open barn in the southwest corner. If you stand at the back, you can pick off Ganados as they storm the entrance, or obliterate a crowd with the handy explosive barrel near the entrance.

There are two more useful pickups in the large house at the north end of the village. One of the barrels behind the stairs always contains a flash grenade, no matter which character you're playing as, and you'll find another hand grenade in the glass cabinet upstairs. For characters like Leon or Ada, these are must-haves, as they greatly widen your tactical options. Hunk can use the flash grenade to set up his neckbreaker.

## BATTLEGROUND










Unlike the other stages, there aren't many safe places in the Battleground. Part of it's due to the level design, but it's mostly because of J.J. He's not afraid to shoot up half the level with his chaingun if it means he might hit you.

If you get a clean shot at J.J., focus your fire on his head. He won't notice body shots, but he'll sometimes be staggered by a slug between the eyes. Alternatively, if you leave J.J. alone and simply stay out of his line of fire, he'll often take out several Ganados for you.

You'll spend most of this stage on the run. The mercenary Ganados, thankfully, are a bit weak and a few rounds from a handgun will usually drop one. It's easy to rack up big combos, but these guys are well-armed. Don't be surprised if one shows up with a rocket launcher, or if you start taking crossbow fire from halfway across the level.

Another reason to stay on the move in Battleground is the time limit. All the time pickups are only worth thirty seconds, and they're scattered throughout the stage. You're almost always going to be racing the clock.

The top of the stairs near the winch is a good place to make a stand if you've got a horde of Ganados on your tail. You'll have a nice, clean shot at anyone pursuing you, and if you are playing a character that happens to have a good long-distance weapon (such as the sniper rifle or the Blacktail), you can ride the winch over to the other side of the stage, where a handy score multiplier is sitting at a great sniping spot.

## CASTLE










This is a weird stage. Firstly, it's linear; you start at the beginning of a path that leads to the topmost chamber of the Castle. Secondly, you can't stay in one place for very long. If you linger for too long in any one area, a prisoner will show up to punch your ticket.

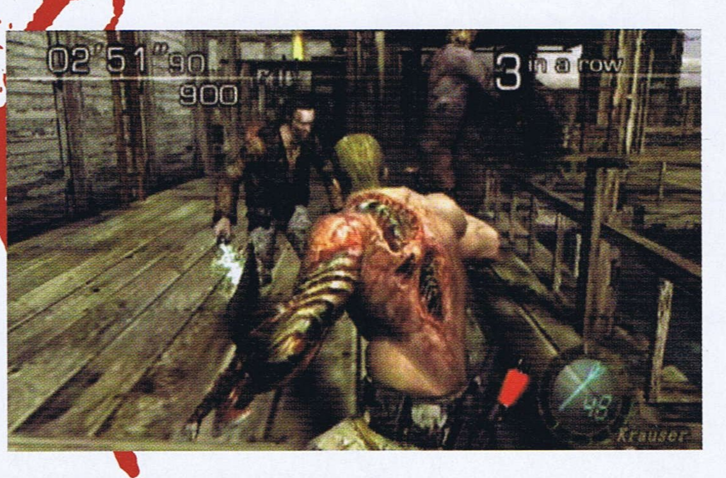
For Krauser and Wesker, this isn't a big deal, and Ada can usually pick a prisoner off from a distance. Hunk and Leon, on the other hand, are going to have a hard time juggling a prisoner and a constant supply of Illuminados. They're going to want to keep moving.

If you're standing outside or by a window, you're probably in a crossbowman's line of fire. It's a good idea to pay attention to where you're standing or you're guaranteed to catch a crossbow bolt at an unfortunate moment. Wesker or Ada can return fire, but the crossbowmen will be replaced as fast as you can shoot them.

There are two great sniper's nests in the Castle, both of which contain score multipliers. One is the little alcove on the battlements, where you fired the cannon in Chapter 3. Tuck yourself into the tower with the score multiplier, stay away from the window, and mow down enemies as they race at you from the castle.

The other score multiplier is upstairs from the first one, in the corner of the room near the treasure chest. You can simply put your back to the wall and waste the Illuminados as they charge off the battlements or up the stairs. This is a lousy place to fight a prisoner, though, so if one's made the scene, eliminate him before you take your position here.

Unless you're playing as Krauser or Wesker, don't go anywhere near the heavily defended room at the top of the Castle. You'll find a time bonus and a score multiplier inside, but you'll also wind up fighting two prisoners. Krauser can swat them away and Wesker can empty his Magnum into them, but for any other character, entering this room is a death sentence.













## WATERWORLD

This is about as easy as it gets. There are plenty of time bonuses, the local explosive-happy Ganados will do half the work for you, and you can rack up combos at your leisure by standing at the northern end of the eastern building's roof, near its outside edge. Crossbowmen on the ground can't hit you from this spot, and any Ganado who wants to reach you must rush through an open flat area: a perfect no-man's-land. Wesker and Ada can coast to victory on Waterworld, as long as their rifle ammo holds out.

There is a complicating factor and that is the presence of a sort of super-Baghead that we've nicknamed Leatherface. Once he arrives, this stage turns into a chase scene. He's strong, his attacks will kill you instantly, and he can bypass ladders by means of a powerful leap.

The moment Leatherface appears, retreat to the eastern building's roof. He'll usually come after you from the south, which gives you plenty of time to either drop him with sniper fire or set up a method of dealing with him. Hunk's best bet is to knock Leatherface off his feet with grenades, then pelt him with bullets when he's down. Leon can whittle him down with long-range Blacktail fire and use the shotgun to slow him down. Krauser, of course, merely needs to swat him, while Ada and Wesker can blow large holes in Leatherface from from a long distance with their sniper rifles.

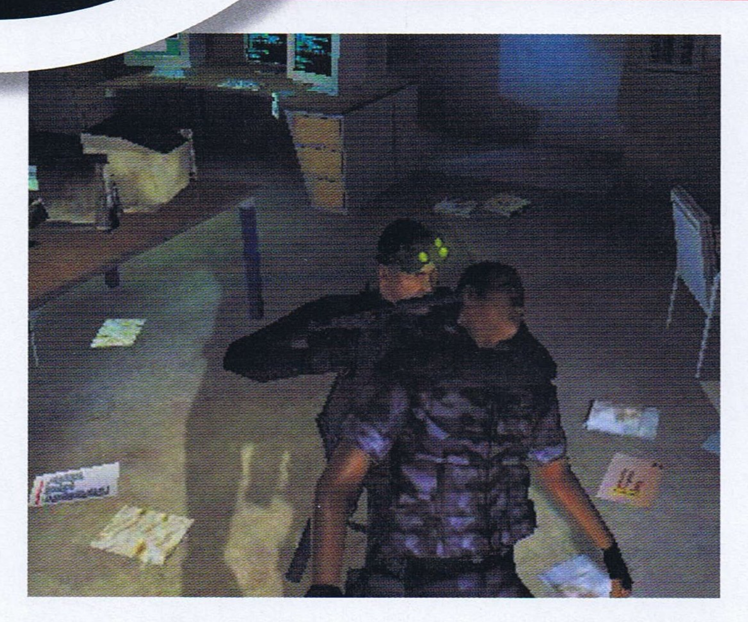
Fortunately, Leatherface only appears twice. In his absence, you'll only need to contend with a crew of mercenary Ganados, much like those found on the Battleground.

All characters can find a hand grenade in the barrel at the top of the southern tower. Also, be sure to grab the score multiplier that's cunningly hidden in the shadows underneath the landing pad. It's pretty easy to miss.

NGC GUARANTEE
TIPS, CHEATS
PROBLEMS SOLVED
EVERYTHING
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THE TIPS YOU NEED FOR THE GAMES YOU'RE PLAYING...

# TIPS EXTRA



## SPLINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY

**UNLOCK ALL CO-OP MISSIONS**
Enter COOPA22COOL as your profile name.

**ELITE MODE**
Complete the game.

**LEDGE GRAB**
There's a way of doing better ledge grabs. Press A, then when Sam brings his legs up, press forward and tap A.

## TIMESPLITTERS FUTURE PERFECT

**CASCADE CHEAT**
Win Bronze, Silver or Gold awards in the Zone Control Arcade league.

**HUMAN GUN SOUNDS CHEAT**
Win Bronze, Silver or Gold awards in the Cat's Out Of The Bag challenge.

**UNLOCK ZOMBIE MONKEY**
Win Bronze, Silver, or Gold awards in the Brain Drain challenge.

**UNLOCK BADASS CYBORG**
Beat the Balls of Steel Cut-Out Shoot-Out challenge.

**UNLOCK BERSEKER SPLITTER**
Finish The Hooded Man.

**BIG HEADS CHEAT**
Complete Outbreak Hotel.



**UNLOCK BOOTY GUARD**
Complete Zany Zeppelin.

**UNLOCK BRACES**
Win an award (Bronze or higher) on Old Blaggers.

**UNLOCK BRAINS**
Win an award (Bronze or higher) on the Brain Drain challenge.

**UNLOCK BRICKS**
Complete the Don't Lose Your Bottle challenge on any difficulty setting.

**UNLOCK DOZER**
Win an award (Bronze or higher) in the Honorary League arcade challenge Lip Up Fatty.

**UNLOCK CAPTAIN ED SHIVERS**
Win an award (Bronze or higher) on the Pirate Gold challenge in the Amateur Arcade league.

**UNLOCK CARRION CARCASS**
Win an award (Bronze or higher) on the Rare Or Well Done challenge.

**CASCADE CHEAT**
Win an award (Bronze or higher) in the Zone Control Arcade league.

**UNLOCK CHANGELING**
Get all Golds or higher in the Honorary league.

**UNLOCK CHINESE CHEF**
Win an award (Bronze or higher) on The Ninja Garden.

**UNLOCK CORP. HART**
Complete the Story mode on Normal difficulty or higher.

**UNLOCK DAISY DISMAY**
Complete the Story mode in co-op.

**UNLOCK DOZER**
Win an award (Bronze or higher) on the Honorary League arcade challenge Lip Up Fatty.

**UNLOCK DR CORTEZ**
Complete U Genius, U-Genix on the Normal difficulty setting or higher.

**UNLOCK DR. PEABODY**
Complete the Amateur league with all Gold awards.

**UNLOCK ELITE HENCHWOMAN**
Complete The Khallos Express level on Normal difficulty.

## DONKEY KONG JUNGLE BEAT

**UNLOCK BEATEN KINGS IN THE ENDING CEREMONY**
Unlock and beat Ghastly King to make Dread Kong, Karate Kong, Ninja Kong and Sumo Kong follow you in the background during the video of the ending ceremony.

**NEW MENU MUSIC**
Collect all of the 72 crests and a new song will play when browsing the main menu.

**NINJAPES IN ENDING CEREMONY**
Collect all of the 72 crests and beat Cactus King or Ghastly King. Most of the white chimps will now have been replaced with Ninjapes during the ending ceremony.

## FIFA STREET

**ALL CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR**
Simply hold L + Y and press Right, Right, Left, Up, Up, Up, Down, Left at the main menu.

**SMALL PLAYERS**
Pause the game at any time while playing, hold L + Y and press Up, Left, Down, Down, Right, Down, Up, Left.

## FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 2

**UNLOCK GHETTO FABULOUS**
Create a boxer and enter GETFAB for the first name. Save the created boxer and Ghetto Fabulous will be unlocked.

**UNLOCK LI'L JON**
Create a boxer and enter Liljon as the first name. Save the created boxer and Li'l Jon will be unlocked.

**UNLOCK LITTLE MAC**
Create a boxer and enter Macman as the first name. Save the created boxer and Little Mac will be unlocked.






# READERS' TOP TEN TIPS

**Can you out-tip Tips Extra? Send in your hint-tastic helps and we'll 'sort out' the top tipster with a mystery prize from Geraint's 'special drawer'. Chances are, it'll be a game.**



## 1. RESIDENT EVIL 4

### Make Stabby

When you're fighting Krauser, he'll run at you with his knife. Instead of shooting, stand back and equip your own knife. Now kick back and wait for Krauser to attack you. When he does, just slash him when he gets close. This means that you can save ammo for when he grows his big claw thing.
***Chris Bowman, Edinburgh***

### 2. GOLDENEYE ROGUE AGENT

**Invisibility**
Using an Action Replay disc, get infinite health and load up a normal multiplayer showdown. If you get hit with the Omen XR you will turn invisible.
***Jamie Williams, Co. Londonderry***

### 3. RESIDENT EVIL 4

**Precious Treasure**
When Ashley gets abducted by the large flying insect, shoot the huge thing that's hanging from the ceiling. Use a powerful weapon (like a mine launcher) You will get loads of treasure for it.
***Charlie Duboc, Folkestone***

### 4. SUPER SMASH BROS MELÉE

**Kirby's Death Suck**
Stand on the edge of the platform, wait for your opponent, then use the Suck In ability. Run off the stage; your opponent will die and you will have won the match.
***Alistair Bain, via email***

### 5. SECOND SIGHT

**Clone Wars**
In the penultimate boss battle in *Second Sight*, hurl the clones into the shelf in the far corner. They will be trapped and their energy will start to drain down automatically.
***Josiah Mainwaring, Wales***

### 6. TIMESPLITTERS FUTURE PERFECT

**Fake Weapons**
Find a weapon on a podium, look downwards and edge towards it. You'll pick up the weapon but it'll appear to still be floating on the podium. Your mates will love it.
***Josiah Mainwaring, Wales***

### 7. SPIDER-MAN 2

**Handbag Justice**
Be a good Spidey and help out an old lady. Beat up a purse snatcher, pick up the victim's purse, then press B, B, X to unleash the handbag fury.
***Daniel Glenfield, Abingdon***

### 8. NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2

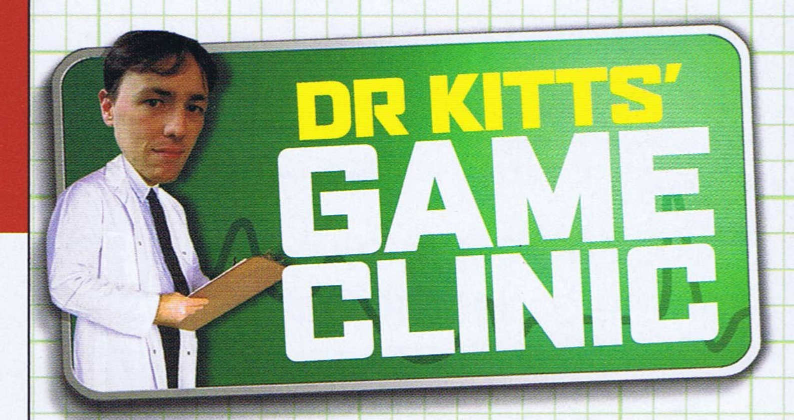
**Spurt**
Wait for the countdown and tap your nitro just a tiny amount. You'll get a Spray Start and your nitro level will be increased.
***Dan Ericsson, West Sussex***

### 9. METROID PRIME FIRST HUNT (DS DEMO)

**Triple Jump**
Go into morph mode, lay a bomb beneath you and let it blow up. When you're almost at the top of the morph jump, turn back to normal and you'll go even higher. Then, before you start falling, tap the screen twice.
***Jonathan Trier Brikner, Denmark***

### 10. FIFA 2005

**Choices, choices**
When you've completed a season and you're choosing a new team, if you don't like the choice available for the category you've just chosen, exit, then go back and there'll be a different selection.
***Ollie Young, Ely***







## Dr Kitts: kind of like a real doctor, but without all that 'sick' unpleasantness.

**Dr Kitts,**
I'm really, really stuck on *Baten Kaitos*. I'm stuck at the point where you have to battle Sowzana. How on earth are you supposed to win? It goes on for *ages*.
**David Sams, Coxhoe**

***Dr Kitts carefully decides which puppy to sacrifice to his God.***
*Yup, this one does go on for ages. As Sowzana's defence is fire based, don't use water or fire attacks, they'll be pretty much useless. Instead, stick to chronos, wind, light and darkness attacks. Stick to it and you'll get it eventually.*

**Dr Kitts,**
How on earth are you supposed to beat Salazar's right hand in *Resident Evil 4*? I've been stuck on him for a good couple of days now, and it's starting to do my head in!
**Elizabeth McHendry, Fife**

***Dr Kitts slowly turns around with his hands on his head.***
*You have two choices here, fight or flight. If you choose flight, dodge its attacks by pressing the correct buttons in the quicktime event. After this it will move over near to the nitrogen canister. Tip it over and it'll slow him down. Run away and wait for the shutter to open. You'll now be in a hallway, so use the same method as before. Try to make all the canisters last until the lift arrives, then make a run for it. If you want to fight him, do pretty much the same, but make sure that you have a rocket launcher with plenty of ammo. Shoot him when he is frozen.*

**Dr Kitts,**
On *Timesplitters: Future Perfect*, how am I supposed to protect the past Cortez? I'm having difficulty with the assassins as they're right little gits to kill and I can't see them properly because they're invisible some of the time. How am I supposed to do it?
**Anthony Rivers, Dartmouth**

***Dr Kitts slowly backs away from the weapon.***
*There are a few handy tips for this. Firstly, you can memorise where the assassins come from; they always start in the same place. There are five assassins in all. Secondly, the Sci-Fi handgun's aiming reticule will turn red when it covers an enemy, invisible or not. Thirdly, don't get bogged down trying to kill assassins that aren't attacking Cortez. Only kill assassins that are direct threats.*




Got an Action Replay? Whack these codes into it...







## RESIDENT EVIL 4

Master code
8QZC-K75F-TDARM
DT5D-5DVB-ZQ1JK

Infinite health
QV9R-WYZA-TN20G
RDU6-G26H-QE721

Max health
Z9HG-865F-YRBVJ
RYTK-K0H6-2BB1D

Infinite ammo
Fire the weapon to get infinite ammo
RDGE-G0R4-P9M4Z
01HQ-83Q1-TKKQY

Infinite rockets
TCR5-U3XD-ZHVAM
VDH5-K40A-V1W2A
CGX4-CVAR-DXX4V
88NP-J80X-KV59A

Tons of cash
HJDH-42E1-XKBX4
F6VM-V98W-C3KFE

1 Hit kills
68BM-XWUK-DYY56
M86K-AHY0-1BP16

Unlock extras
CXCN-2RQC-CU6Z9
N9T6-QZWA-KQ4F5

Faster game
G45E-KDJ3-XCMR4
FZW8-PY2Z-CPH6T

## GHOST RECON 2

Master code
ABM3-9B8F-CH9BR
3QD3-8TJX-PZXBJ
QTB2-1N97-MZFTA
14A5-G0KQ-D08EP
RJ9G-9D7C-YP119

Infinite ammo
5H5B-B2UY-EN6HA
M6TU-DEDQ-KBPNE

Loads of points
FTCJ-942D-W799J
XK9U-GB75-6CX9N

Movie clips available
NP6T-9KC7-R5CX4
2JPH-EUD9-50TNN

Movie clips purchased
X8U3-1VR3-24CWF
ZX6U-RC0F-B7Z5N

## SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY

Master code
K94D-CU8Q-BBNJ3
7MKV-XCX5-4QQ89
DJYR-6FE7-KMXX9
QE4M-MCM8-UYHKU
BKQ7-Z490-FUUG9

Infinite health
PZNZ-84EK-G93DV
DEEP-M8VJ-6EYC0
416D-VEVM-VP9R4

Infinite ammo
Y0UX-H8YF-Z5WPZ
7P6M-7MJ3-N766E
EGNU-XX16-WVNZR
0351-8X26-3FZQR

Big Fisher
MUV8-29J0-BUY2F
9K0N-HB6U-N9KW4
Then enter one of these two codes.
4AZ3-86KX-GWJGN
QH0K-VND2-8Z8PJ

NGC YOUR TOP TIPS

**YOUR TOP TIPS** SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE AND BAG YOURSELF A PRIZE...

Found an interesting tip, secret or quirk in one of your games? Send it into us immediately! Each month we'll stick the best into our Readers' Tips section. If yours is the number one readers' tip, we'll send you a cool prize. Good, huh? Just don't send us cheat codes from the 'net...

## HERE'S MY TOP TIP...

IT'S FOR

AND THIS IS HOW IT WORKS

Name ..........

Address ..........

.......... Postcode ..........

*Send to:*
TIPS EXTRA, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW
or e-mail ngc@futurenet.co.uk

If you don't want to cut up your magazine, send a photocopy or scribble your entry on a piece of paper and then send it to us. Or just buy two copies of the mag. That way you can keep a spare copy in the khazi, you know, to help focus your mind.

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# SKILL CLUB 2005

## The first rule of Skill Club is…



Are your games just not tough enough for you anymore? Are you sick of just going through the motions completing another game? Then why not come on down to the Skill Club 2005, where you will learn the meaning of 'difficult'. Actually, looking at you, we don't think you have what it takes, you'd best stick to your cheat disks. It takes a real gamer to compete in the Skill Club, and we don't think you've got the grapes. Feel like proving us wrong?

**How It Works**

We've conjured up 20 tricky challenges, and you can tackle any or all of them that you like. If you complete three, you'll gain a place in the Bronze league; complete seven, and you'll be honoured with a placing in the Silver league. Ten challenges completed means you'll be entered into the Gold league, and a mighty 14 proves that you're the best of the best and are worthy of entry to the Platinum league. You'll get a certificate for each league that you place in, and if you somehow manage to beat all 20 challenges you'll get a special Skill Club Guru award and certificate, plus something nice that we've got lying around. So what are you waiting for?

### THE RULES

- **Three completed challenges earns a Bronze placing; seven a Silver, 10 a Gold, and 14 a Platinum.**
- **You can enter any challenges you like.**
- **Each challenge must be accompanied by either the photographic or videotaped proof that is requested.**
- **Use of cheat codes, Action Replays and the like is strictly prohibited – cheaters will be subjected to ritual humiliation for all to see.**
- **You are allowed to submit extra challenges at a later date to increase your standing – you don't have to do them all at once.**
- **There are only 18 challenges here – we'll be adding two more over the coming months to take advantage of games such as *Killer 7* and *Geist*.**
- **If you want your tapes etc back, please include a stamped, addressed envelope.**

● NGC would like to offer a thousand thanks to the following members of the Games Radar forums for their contributions to Skill Club 2005: Pell, Rex_McGee, TS2Master, tnman, LewisVoigtlanderFord, Andrew Mills, Drumstick, Plasticcoated, Thanatos, Vyper, Lenty, sntaa, Adam Pollard, and Falcon. Cheers!

## NGC SKILL CLUB ENTRY FORM



**Hello there,**

Completed enough challenges to earn a certificate? Tick them off here and send your completed form plus video/photo proof to:
**Skill Club 2005,**
**NGC Magazine,**
**30 Monmouth Street,**
**Bath**
**BA1 2BW**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | *F-Zero GX* | K | *Tales of Symphonia* |
| B | *Super Smash Bros. Melée* | L | *Freedom Fighters* |
| C | *Pikmin 2* | M | *The Legend of Zelda The Wind Waker* |
| D | *Soul Calibur* | N | *Timesplitters 2* |
| E | *Metroid Prime 2 Echoes* | O | *Eternal Darkness* |
| F | *Resident Evil* | P | *DK: Jungle Beat* |
| G | *Spider-Man 2* | Q | *Resident Evil 4* |
| H | *1080° Snowboarding* | R | *Timesplitters Future Perfect* |
| I | *Donkey Konga* | S | *TBA* |
| J | *Rogue Squadron 2 Rogue Leader* | T | *TBA* |

**Please send my certificate to:**

**NAME:** ..............................................

**ADDRESS:** ..............................................

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Use a photocopy of this form or copy it down onto a piece of paper if you'd rather not cut your copy of **NGC** Magazine.

# NGC SKILL CLUB 2005

## Challenge A — F-Zero GX



**What You Must Do:** Beat all the staff ghosts.
**Proof:** A photo or video of your times.

## Challenge K — Tales of Symphonia



**What You Must do:** Rack up an 85+ combo. Unison Attacks are key here.
**Proof:** A photo of the post-battle statistics screen – the screen you get after you emerge victorious from a fight.

## Challenge B — Super Smash Bros. Melée



**What You Must Do:** Get a total time of under 3 minutes 50 seconds for 100-man melée.
**Proof:** A photo of the screen showing the total time spent.

## Challenge L — Freedom Fighters



**What You Must Do:** On Freedom Fighters Mode, complete the last level (Fort Jay) without using a single recruit.
**Proof:** A video of the hoisted flag, skipping the credits and showing normal difficulty complete.

## Challenge C — Pikmin 2

**What You Must Do:** Complete the game in a mere 10 days with all 201 pieces of treasure found. There's literally no room for error here.
**Proof:** A photo of the stats screen showing how much treasure you've collected.

## Challenge M — The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker

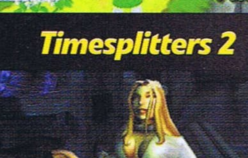


**What You Must Do:** Beat Gannondorf with only three hearts. That means you can only have collected three hearts in the entire game – no more than that!
**Proof:** A video of your performance.

## Challenge D — Soul Calibur 2

**What You Must Do:** With Mitsurugi and the Damascus Sword (which can't block attacks), complete 15 battles on Standard Extra Survival mode. Oh yes.
**Proof:** A video of your performance.

## Challenge N — Timesplitters 2

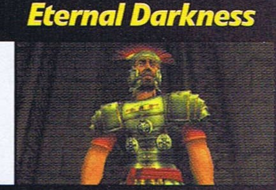


**What You Must Do:** Get 56 Arcade Awards.
**Proof:** Video of you scrolling down the list of 56 arcade awards.

## Challenge E — Metroid Prime 2: Echoes

**What You Must Do:** Complete it with 22% items – no missiles, energy, dark/light beam expansions, bombs or beam special weapons.
**Proof:** A photo of the ending stats screen with 22% items clearly visible.

## Challenge O — Eternal Darkness



**What you Must Do:** Complete the game three times, once with each artifact.
**Proof:** A photo showing that Eternal Mode is available to select.

## Challenge F — Resident Evil

**What You Must Do:** Complete the game in under two hours with Jill. A nice speed run that keeps it tight, but certainly not impossible as it just requires a reasonably efficient route.
**Proof:** A photo of your time.

## Challenge P — Donkey Kong: Jungle Beat





**What You Must Do:** Get a Platinum medal for every single level.
**Proof:** A short video, scrolling through the level select screen, showing the awards.

## Challenge G — Spider-Man 2



**What You Must Do:** Find every single token. Secret, Hideout, Skyscraper… all of them!
**Proof:** Photos or video of the relevant stats.

## Challenge Q — Resident Evil 4

**What You Must Do:** Complete the game with a 90% hit ratio.
**Proof:** A photo of the end of game statistics. You are not allowed to use a cleared game file for this challenge.

## Challenge H — 1080° Snowboarding





**What You Must Do:** Beat 1'22"00 on Ride Easy Railways - Trestle Trouble, the toughest track in the game. Any character/board combo can be used except for the Rocket Board.
**Proof:** A photo of your time.

## Challenge R — Timesplitters: FP





**What You Must Do:** Complete the whole game on Story mode in a total time of under 1 hour 55 minutes – good luck.
**Proof:** A short video of your times from the statistics screen in player progress.

## Challenge I — Donkey Konga

**What You Must Do:** Combo the entire song 'Don't Stop Me Now' on Gorilla mode. Yipes! Great and OK notes are allowed but you cannot lose your combo from the first note.
**Proof:** A photo of the end-of-song screen.

## Challenge S — TBA

**What You Must Do:** TBA.
**Proof:** TBA

## Challenge  J — Rogue Squadron 2 Rogue Leader



**What You Must Do:** Get Gold medals on all levels, including the secret levels.
**Proof:** Photos or video of every medal.

## Challenge T — TBA



**What You Must Do:** TBA.
**Proof:** TBA

HEY! IT'S THE CONTINUATION OF...

# GAME ON!





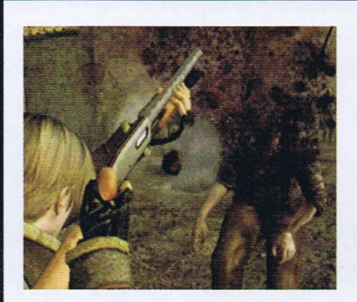

Sadly this is to be the last ever Game On. So don't send us your challenges whatever you do. You won't win anything, you won't get printed, all you'll do is risk a public berating for your own idiocy (unless you have a decent excuse, but those are a little few and far between, these days).

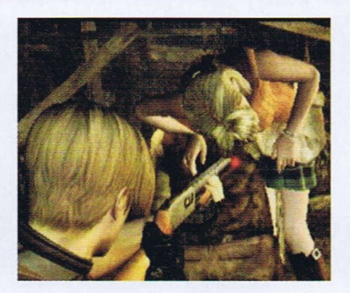
The person that deserves the game this time will still get it, but we will not be dishing out freebies for your gaming ideas any longer (well, not for your challenge ideas).

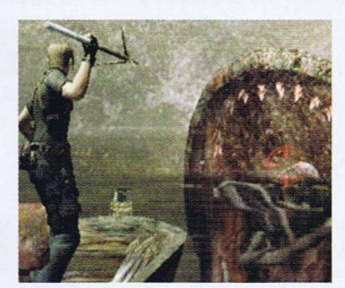
So what will replace Game On? Will it be a double page spread devoted to Paul's long flowing locks? Will it be a strange and mysterious spread entitled Geraint's World of Gimps and Gimpery? Only time can tell.

Thanks to all those who have sent in their gaming ideas, we hope you're enjoying your free games.

## RESIDENT EVIL 4 CHALLENGE 1







### PISTOL MANIA

**Stuart Wall,** Ruislip

It's a quite simple challenge, this one. It's a tried and tested formula that's been around for years, yet can still make any game seem fresh and challenging. Yes that's right, it's one of those 'just use the pistol' kind of deals, hurrah!

All you need to do is to get as far as you can in *Resident Evil 4* using only the pistol. It's just the bog standard pistol only, that means you can't buy a new pistol (although you can upgrade the one you start with), and you have to shoot every single enemy you come across (including Baghead). Now just keep going until you either die or you run out of ammo, whichever comes first. I suppose that sounds simple? Well just you try it, you'll soon be thinking differently, just you wait. First person to complete it gets... nothing.

**GET TO**


SALAZAR'S "RIGHT HAND"

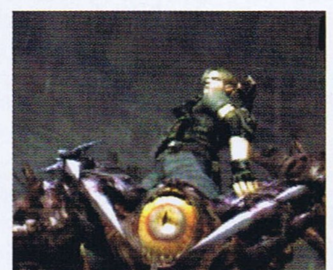

CASTLE ENTRANCE


RESCUE ASHLEY

## RESIDENT EVIL 4 CHALLENGE 2







### THE NEXT STEP

**Tony C,** Grimsby

This challenge takes the 'just use the pistol' challenge just one step further than normal. If you feel you're up to it after trying that one, then here's what you need to do.

Start a new game on the Normal difficulty setting. When the game starts, discard your gun immediately, you won't be needing it where you're going (and that's almost certainly going to be certain death).

You cannot directly kill anyone, unless it is for a collectable item, such as a key card or to rescue Ashley. You may carry a rocket launcher and grenades, but they are strictly only to be used on the bosses (the grenades can also be used on the crank turning mission with Abby). Also, you are allowed to use harpoons on Del Lago. Finally, you are not allowed to save. That's right, you have to see how far you can get before you die a horrible and painful death.

Are you up to the challenge? Then get busy playing.

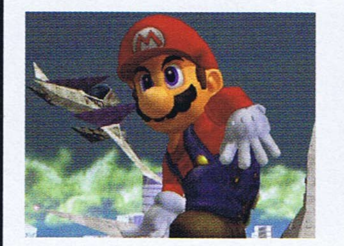
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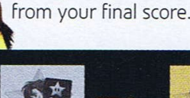

CHAPTER 4+


PAST MENDEZ


DEL LAGO

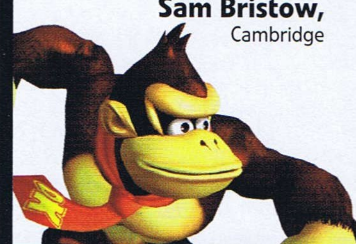
## SUPER SMASH BROS. MELÉE





# RINGS AROUND SATURN

**Sam Bristow,** Cambridge



Yes, it's another *Super Smash Bros. Melée* challenge! Here's what you have to do: set a normal Melée battle on Yoshi's Island with the CPU as a level 2 Bowser, set the time as two minutes, make all the items Mr. Saturn and set the item fall to high. Now, the aim of the challenge is to destroy as many of the Mr. Saturns as possible. You get 10 points for each one, but here's the catch: you're not actually allowed to hit Bowser. At the end of the match, take away the percentage of damage done to Bowser away from your final score.

**POINTS**  300+ 150+  50+

## TIMESPLITTERS 2



# RUN THE GAUNTLET

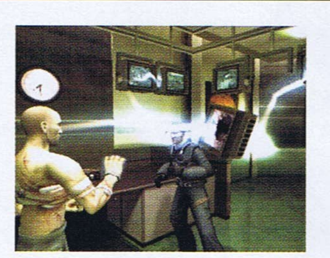
**Dave Hodgkins and Robert Boyle,** Coventry

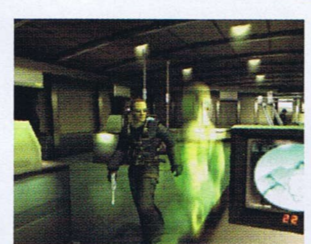


Start a two player multiplayer match on arcade custom, select Elimination and choose the Mexican level. Select one hit one kill, one life, no time limit and set everything else to no and choose five vintage rifles for weapons. Decide who will be the shooter and who will be the runner. Get the shooter to stand upstairs next to the big bell and get the runner to stand underneath it in the archway. the objective is to see how many times the runner can run from the archway to the small huts, although he has to go between the huts, not to the side.

**POINTS**  7  5  3

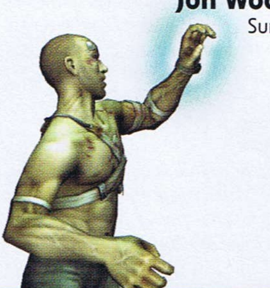
## SECOND SIGHT





# DIRTY SNIPER

**Jon Wood,** Surrey

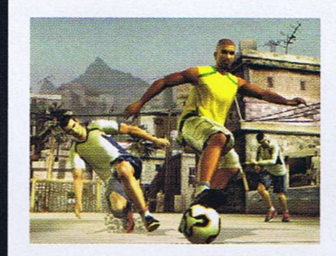


*Second Sight* isn't exactly open to abuse. However, there is some fun to be had from using your psychic powers in some kind of never ending quest for the ultimate in comedy death. But luckily enough, there are *some* things you can do...

Here's how you go about it: on the Madness level, climb up the watchtower at the start, turn off the searchlight if you want (it's not necessary) and try to kill all five guards with headshots and see how many you can take out before you get detected and your fun is put to an end.

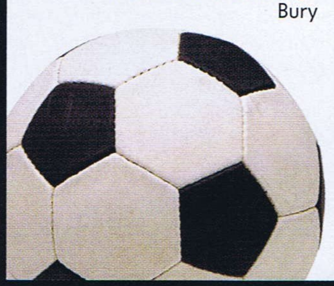
**POINTS**  5  4  3

## FIFA STREET



# BOG STANDARD

**Steven Crossley,** Bury



Buying players? Surely that's just not street enough for *FIFA Street*, you'd best keep it hardcore and down with the kids. Never let it be said that I'm out of touch with the 'yoof' of today.

Enough of such talk, here's the challenge. You have to win as many tournaments as you possibly can without buying a single new player. Yes, that's right, get as far as you can using only your starting line up. You aren't allowed to replace anyone. It may be the harder way of doing things, but it's more fun dammit!

**POINTS**     

## 30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW

# MAILBOX

### EMAIL US!

Got something to say? Run out of stamps? Guards won't let you near a pen? Then log on to the interweb and 'get' us 'at'…

**ngc@futurenet.co.uk**

Include your *name and address* so we know who to credit the letter to. Do it! Do it! Do it now!

## STAR LETTER

If you send us the best letter of the month, you'll receive a shiny new Gamecube game from our bulging sack of shiny new Gamecube games. Nice.

### "Revolutionary"

I have enjoyed following the rumours concerning the Nintendo Revolution of late. Everyone wants to see something or other come out of Nintendo's next console, but I believe I'm probably the only one who wants to see something truly revolutionary – the death of Mario, Zelda, Kirby and other much loved Nintendo characters!

The next-gen machines are surrounded by mystery as to what they will be like and what games they will have. I for one am looking to forward to what new experiences the next consoles will bring. My only concern is Nintendo.

If Nintendo want to release a real revolution into the gaming market, shouldn't their attempt push forward something and someone new? Are gamers really that excited about yet more Mario and Zelda games after this generation of consoles?

If you look at other icons, whether they be in film or games, a steady decline takes place as people grow tired of reproduced genres and the characters that encompass them. I believe that if Nintendo really want to be revolutionary, they have to change not only their approach to game genres and how we play games, but their characters as well.

If you look at *Mario Sunshine*, compared to the N64 title it was disappointing despite the fact that it introduced new features. Of those I have discussed it with, many blamed over-familiarity with Mario as the prime factor, rather than the gameplay, which had at least made minor changes in its workings.

I know Nintendo will keep its characters as they are too big a draw for potential buyers. Which is a shame, because the company that is pushing the Revolution will end up doing it half-heartedly. As long as Mario embodies what the average consumer thinks of Nintendo, their image will remain the same.

***Darren Fitzpatrick, Gourock***

***You're advocating doing away with many of the things that make Nintendo what it is. Some new characters or game genres would be great, and maybe that's what we'll see on Revolution, but I think the world would be a duller place without the prospect of a new Zelda or Mario title. Perhaps a new way of controlling games will freshen things up.* Ed**

### "Husbandry"

The footage of the new *Zelda* game really blew me away. I'm really looking forward to playing as a more grown-up Link, with his feet back on firm ground. But one thing worries me. In the trailer it looked like caring for and using animals will play a big part in the new game. Now, maybe I'm being pessimistic, but this sounds like a bit of a gimmick. Animal husbandry just doesn't do it for me, I'm afraid.

I've noticed there seems to be a worrying trend with Gamecube iterations of Nintendo franchises. They say they're going to treat us to a 'gameplay revolution' but it ends up being some tacky gimmick. Just look at *Mario Sunshine*'s water pack, *Double Dash*'s wacky karts and two-player mechanic, *StarFox*'s ropey on-foot sections, those *Mario Tennis* power shots and (dare I say it) *Wind Waker*'s cel-shaded graphics. Sure, all of these additions brought something new to each of the respective franchises, but did they improve them? And do we expect to see any of these changes returning in future games?

I'm anticipating the Revolution to bring about real change in each of Nintendo's franchises, but until then, with Gamecube being so similar to the N64, I can only predict more misconceived gimmicks being artificially welded onto franchise games to give them some superficial freshness. What are your thoughts on all this?

***Tom Laverack, Crowthorne***

***I'd say you're being a tiny bit harsh. Animals have always featured prominently in Zelda – Epona and the Cuccos starred in some of the most memorable moments of the series – and of the other games you mention,* StarFox *is the only one we didn't enjoy as much as we had hoped. What about* Metroid Prime *for an original take on a Nintendo franchise? Maybe Revolution will satisfy our craving for something completely different, but sometimes new levels and a few visual enhancements can be most welcome…* Ed**

### "Didn't want"

I do agree with your review of *StarFox Assault*, having imported the game from the US. It did everything I didn't want it to do by having poor on-foot missions. What happened to the good old days of *Starwing* and *Lylat Wars*?

Having said that, I think you may have been too critical on Namco, if not the score of the game. Why? Well, if companies never tried anything new with games, they'd all be the same, with tweaked graphics and a deadly similar storyline to the last one. I know in some cases this is okay but, looking at the bigger picture, we wouldn't all still be into games if designers stuck to tried and tested formulae. So I acknowledge that *Assault* could have been better, but at least Namco tried. Heck, it's better than Rare's effort.

***Robert Ashmore, South Normanton***

***In StarFox's case, all anyone in the* NGC *office wanted was a bigger, prettier version of the N64 game. We would have been happy to sacrifice originality for a beautiful update of the Katina and Macbeth levels.* Ed**

### Bonus Letters

What sort of moron makes an advert about a finger flying through a wall?
**Matt Costello, Huyton**
***A highly paid one.* Ed**

Geraint is a cool guy. Seriously, I love the bloke, but not in that way as I am a boy (no offence).
**Allie McAllister, Middlesbrough**
***That won't bother him much.* Ed**

When somebody says Mario, how do Mario and Luigi know that Mario is being called or if Luigi is being called by his last name?
**Stephen Paget, Kilmarnock**
***I'm confused.* Ed**

I happen to be a girl.
**Katie Carter, Southend**
***Excellent.* Ed**

I have seen you don't like Diddy Kong. OK Diddy is hardly the best character in the world but he is definitely not the worst. What did he do to deserve all these nasty comments?
**David Hodgkins, Coventry**
***He was born.* Ed**

That was supposed to be some sort of joke.
**Ethan Jeffs, Luton**
***Ho ho.* Ed**

It is essentially all about money, that's why it's called the games industry.
**Tim Lennox, via email**
***Quite true.* Ed**

**HONOURABLE MENTIONS**
Thanks to everyone who wrote in, including (but not limited to): Robin Bradley, Basingstoke; Thomas Gordon, Derry; Mr J Jones, Littlehampton; Alan Kerr, Lanark; James Burbidge, Brentwood; Daniel Thomas, Holywell; Joseph, Bath; Joseph Cotterell, Birmingham; Jordan Finley, via email; Matthew Duffell, Chorley; Zac Hill, Bideford; Andy Simmonds, via email; Daniel MacDonald, Stockport; Matthew Hall, via email; Tony Pang, via email; Jihad Hassania, Isleworth; Joshua Jasper, Leicester; Nathan Moffat, Highley; Roseanna Whinney, Suffolk; Tony Southion, London; David Morrisby, Chesham; Conor Kelly, Stockport; Ryan






## "Turnip"

If the graphics on the Nintendo DS are of N64 quality, why do developers pump out puzzle games that a GBA could run with ease? This does not show off what the machine can do. *Super Mario 64 DS* looks good but it isn't the most technically challenging game in the world for a console. I buy consoles for the gameplay rather than the graphics, but it would be nice to have some more amazing games instead of simple 2D ones that have all the imagination of a squashed turnip.
***Ross Hetherington, Redditch***

***Simple 2D puzzlers suit the handheld medium and work well with a stylus. Even if they were to convert some of the flashiest N64 titles, they wouldn't look all that visually impressive to today's gamers. It's all about the gameplay.* Ed**

## "Linear"

It took you just under 30 hours to finish *Resident Evil 4* for the first time you played it? Even trying to shoot everything that might be valuable, find all the secrets and play the shooting gallery mini-games, it still only took me 21 hours, without a walkthrough guide. It's a practically linear game.
***Paul Wilde, Fairfield***

***You're some kind of gaming animal.* Ed**



## "Just gay"

I was just wondering what ever happened to the different colours for Gamecube that were originally planned. We got black, purple and silver, but whatever happened to gold and that salmon pink one. I'm just curious, I wouldn't either of them, the gold one looked too tacky and the pink one (as well as the purple one) is just gay. I got the black one (the cool one) and silver isn't so bad either, but it wasn't out when I got mine, unfortunately.
***Ross Stevenson, Claygate***

***Other countries have different colours, such as 'spice orange' and 'minty kind of off-white'. Not that you'd want either of those. With the benefit of hindsight, Nintendo would have released only the black version in Europe.* Ed**




## "Sticky key"

Is there any way to save controllers that have a sort of sticky key problem? In the neutral position my controller seems to move the cursor to the right. This hasn't just happened to one controller, it's happened to four. I was hoping that my Wavebird wouldn't get this problem but it just has. If I have to get new controllers, that's £110 down the drain. Is there any way to fix this?
***Seb Wood, Cobham***

***To reset the controller, hold X, Y and Start for three seconds. Or, according to Geraint, bang it really hard on the edge of a table.* Ed**

## Bonus Letters

Issue 105, on page 5, it says 'from the lovely people who made *GoldenEye* on the N64,' but Rare did that, not EA.
**Jason Ashmore, via email**

***Some of the people from Rare formed Free Radical Design and made* Timesplitters: Future Perfect*, which is published by EA. I win!* Ed**

You said in the *Banjo Pilot* review that Pipsy wasn't in the game. Who the heck is Pipsy? There is NO such character as Pipsy in the B-K universe! I've checked the list twice and Pipsy is not there!
**Luke Anderson, Alton**

***Pipsy was in* Diddy Kong Racing*, which was Banjo's first ever outing. I win again! Now who's your daddy?* Ed**

Please open a shop here at the Faroe Islands.
**Vagnur Thomsen, Faroe Islands**

***If I knew where that was, I would.* Ed**

So do I get anything for this outstanding spot… no?
**Mike Emeny, Lincoln**

***No.* Ed**

That guy just gets madder and madder!
**Tony Southion, London**

***Doesn't he just.* Ed**

Why aren't we still playing our Magnavox Odysseys with Gamecube controllers?
**Gerard Mitchell, London**

***I can't think of a single good reason.* Ed**

## CORRECTION CORNER

In Issue 105, on page 86, under the section 'Flash Grenades', you use the phrase, 'Enemies whore' rather than, 'Enemies who are'. Teaching children naughty words – you should be ashamed of yourselves…
***Neil Bowden, N. Ireland***

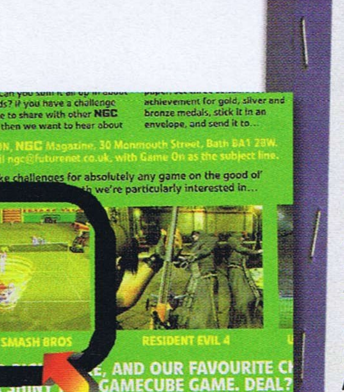
***Believe me, I am.* Ed**

Your review of *Robots* in issue 105 – I really think his name is Rodney, not Rooney, otherwise the character would be angry and very offensive to everyone.
***Iain Callaway, St Helens***

***Coming soon – a Pokémon game featuring Mutu.* Ed**

Just take a look at the circled pictures and writing. Need I say anything else?
***Henry Tsang, Sudbury***

***Oh. My. God. Where's my solid metal monkey-beating stick?* Ed**


100 words? If you have a challenge you'd like to share with other NGC readers, then we want to hear about

achievement for gold, silver and bronze medals, stick it in an envelope, and send it to…

GAME ON, NGC Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Or email ngc@futurenet.co.uk, with Game On as the subject line.

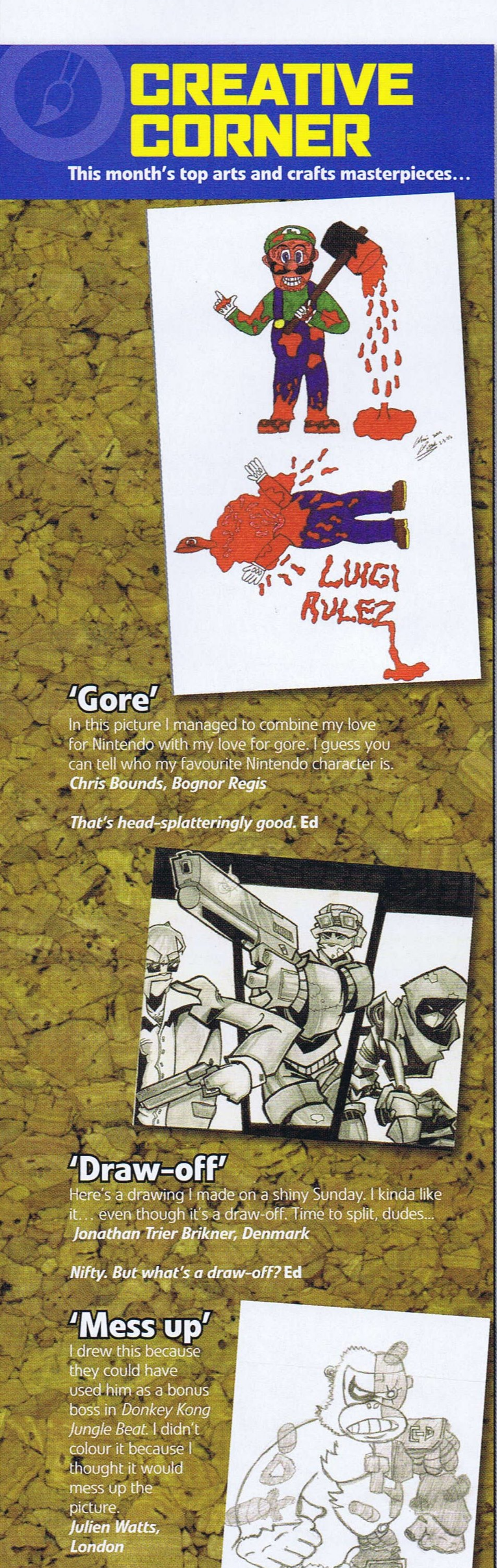
We'll take challenges for absolutely any game on the good ol'

we're particularly interested in…

ASH BROS. MELEE | DONKEY SMASH BROS | RESIDENT EVIL 4

E, AND OUR FAVOURITE C
GAMECUBE GAME. DEAL?

Attrill, via email; Rupert Cole & Staszek Welsh, Birmingham; Ross Richards, Sutton Coldfield; Ben Evans, via email; Gilles Reuse, Belgium; Andy Bridge, Kent; Sam Rose, Bingham; Chris Bounds, Bognor Regis; Damian Doyley, Dinnington; Aaron Ayling, Macclesfield; Samuel Dowling, Notts; Paul Hutchings, via email; Gareth Tidball, Hatherleigh; Dave Challis, via email; Rob Green, St.Helens; James Dudney, Swanley; Joe Timms, Stewartfield; Tim Osborne, Newcastle-under-Lyme; Graham Lockwood, Wimborne; Marcus Spalding, Gloucester; Craig Sharpe, London; Jayne Cope, Malta; Sarah Alldred, Manchester; William Hardy, Milton Keynes; Andrew Wills, Aylesbury; Scott Garner, Lancs; and many more. Thanks. folks!




# CREATIVE CORNER

**This month's top arts and crafts masterpieces…**

## 'Gore'

In this picture I managed to combine my love for Nintendo with my love for gore. I guess you can tell who my favourite Nintendo character is.
***Chris Bounds, Bognor Regis***

***That's head-splatteringly good.* Ed**

## 'Draw-off'

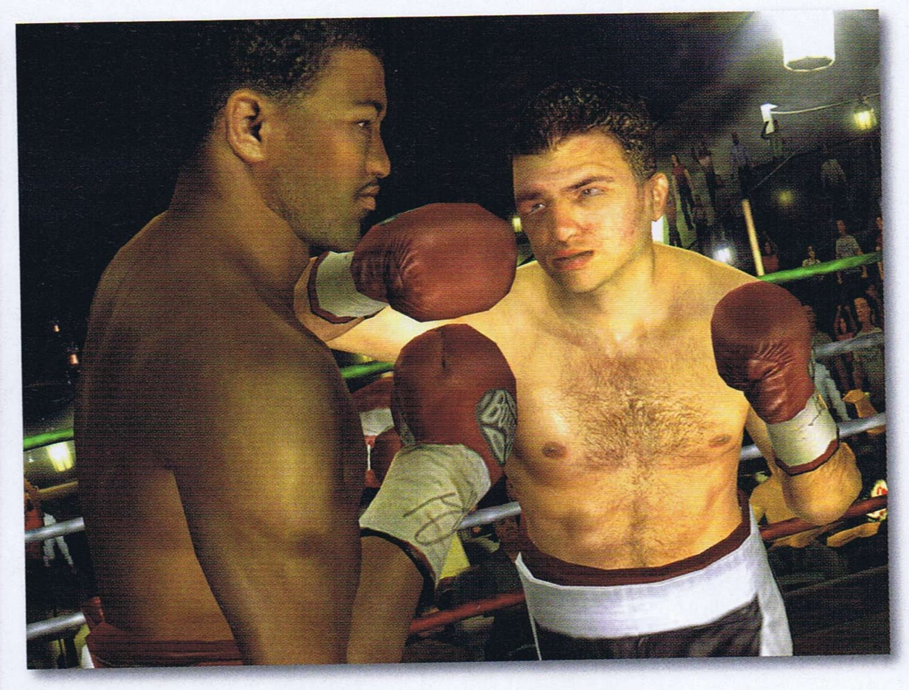
Here's a drawing I made on a shiny Sunday. I kinda like it… even though it's a draw-off. Time to split, dudes…
***Jonathan Trier Brikner, Denmark***

***Nifty. But what's a draw-off?* Ed**

## 'Mess up'

I drew this because they could have used him as a bonus boss in *Donkey Kong Jungle Beat*. I didn't colour it because I thought it would mess up the picture.
***Julien Watts, London***

***Cyborg gorilla – excellent.* Ed**



## "Struck me"

After playing *Fight Night Round 2* all weekend (undoubtedly EA's best franchise) and reliving memories of *Super Punch Out*, something struck me. No, not a well-aimed left hook, but the fact that the Gamecube controller would be perfect for a Nintendo update of *Punch Out*. Think about it – the original arcade cabinet from the 80s had two handles that you had to use to punch, block and such. Now look at the GC pad. Two sticks and two shoulder buttons – that's all you'd need! Use the sticks to control each hand, both up or down to block, or push left or right to parry. Then use the L and R buttons, in conjunction with stick moves to punch – a light tap for a jab, harder presses for harder punches, and click for haymakers or special punches.

I reckon this could be great, and with all the talk of Revolution's new input device (my money's on laptop/DS-style touch pads rather than sticks), this could be a great opportunity for Nintendo to show that it can still innovate, without the need for gimmicky white elephants like the DS or bongo drums (sorry, but that's just my opinion).
***Dean Howard, Barnsley***

***Sounds great. How about it, Nintendo?* Ed**

## "Pain to play"

I recently discovered a very bad thing which I call the 'now or never' syndrome. It's when developers make their games in a way that you only get one opportunity to complete certain objectives. The best examples are *Metroid Prime* and *Echoes*. Have you forgotten to scan the boss before you killed him? Well bad luck then! Same goes with the photographs in *Wind Waker*, the secret game in *Prince of Persia: Sands Of Time* and the cheat tokens in *StarFox Adventures*. While the latter two are not so bad, because they are not so long and difficult, the *Metroid* games are a pain to play again in full.

That's why I'm so alert when I play *Echoes* now – I don't want to miss a thing. Why can't developers make games so that you can try every objective whenever you like? I think that the situation at the moment annoys even the biggest hardcore gamer. I hate it.
***Henrie van Meurs, Holland***

***One man's frustration is another man's value for money. And it's a handy excuse, should you ever need one, to play your games all over again.* Ed**

## "Endless"

Is it just me or don't you think more could have been done to make *Pokémon Dash* a fun and enjoyable game? It could have become a new way to make use of your GBA Pokémon by racing them against opponents. Instead of just having power-ups, certain types of Pokémon could run faster across some terrain and be slowed down by others. You could also make use of your Pokémon's moves, like using flamethrower to burn down trees, or using water Pokémon to swim and hurt fire enemies. The possibilities are endless. If only the Pokémon Company had taken advantage.



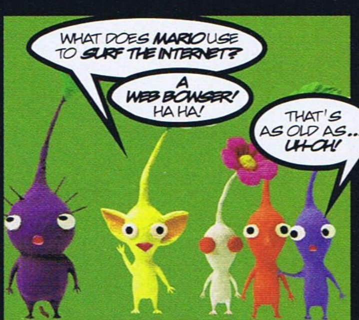
***Adam Paul, Norwich***

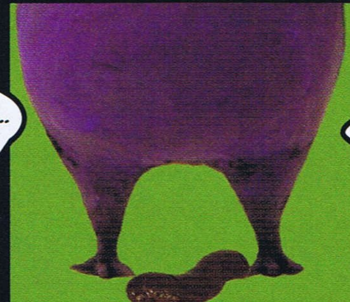
***It does seem like a missed opportunity. They***

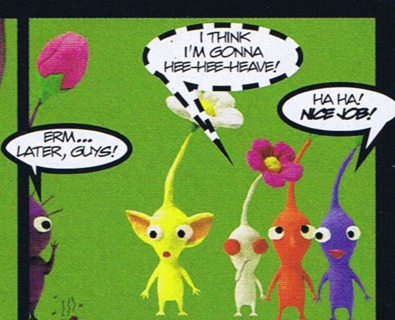
# Grintendo!

SEND US YOUR NINTENDO JOKES! MAKE THEM GOOD AND YOU WIN A GAME. MAKE THEM CRAP AND THE YELLOW PIKMIN DIES. HORRIBLY. AND IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT.
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***should definitely make more use of the DS's ability to read GBA carts.* Ed**

## "Turn off"

Some aspects of the DS are very annoying. When you reset the time or change the GBA screen, the DS will turn off. I'm really getting tired of it. So, Nintendo, why did you do that? Did you just want to make us 'TOUCH!' it more?
***Daniel Leigh, via email***

***How often do you need to fiddle with the settings in your DS? Why?* Ed**

## "Done it in"

I have recently been experiencing a strange phenomenon in which the end of my right thumb is inexplicably cracked, dry and losing all feeling. But don't stop reading there! Me and a couple of my buddies think this problem is directly related to computer games. I am now 16 and have been gaming since I was about six. I believe that the constant battering of my thumb on the buttons of controllers has finally done it in. I, and two other people I know, are currently experiencing the same condition, which I like to call Gamers' Thumb. Is there anybody else out there that is experiencing the same thing?
***Sam Gordon, High Wycombe***

***Ambulance for Mr Gordon! Actually, the only potential gaming ailment I've heard of is 'vibration white finger' which causes tingling and numbness, and is more commonly associated with prolonged use of power tools. Either stop bashing those buttons so hard or go see a doctor.* Ed**

## "Copyright"

The new *Zelda* footage is amazing. However, as Nintendo are well known for getting the lawyers in at any sniff of copyright infringement, I was a bit shocked to see that some of the characters would not look out of place in the Lord Of The Rings films. The hog-riding goblins could be mistaken for the Warg riders, the fire boss is a close match to the Balrog, the redead look and have the same colour as the oathbreakers and there is a creature that looks very close in appearance to Shelob. Let's just hope that talking trees like the Ents don't appear (oh hang on, what about the Deku tree). I'm not bothered, because having a similar style to Lord Of The Rings is a good thing and the game will be tons better than any of EA's offerings, but can Nintendo really complain about copyright when they too are obviously guilty of infringement?
***Darren Revell, Plymouth***

***Lord Of The Rings is hardly original, drawing its imagery from centuries of folklore as well as a multitude of existing films. And the first Zelda game was inspired by Ridley Scott's 1985 movie Legend, which in turn was influenced by Jean Cocteau's 1946 adaptation of Beauty And The Beast. You might as well say* Ocarina Of Time *ripped off Princess Mononoke. Which it didn't.* Ed**

## "In love"

It's finally happened – I'm in love! While travelling through London I made the decision to enter a superstore and came across the most beautiful thing I have ever seen. She was thin and had a perfect pair (of screens). Yep, you guessed it; I'm in love with the most wanted lady on the market. Having touched the DS and been pleasured by it, I am left with no choice but to grab it by the hips and keep touching. I feared *Wario Ware* as the games looked graphically weak and quite tedious, but I was very wrong. The experience of quickfire, comical games was stunning. I'm hooked. Can you help me keep my hands to myself?
***Stuart Bartlett, Prestatyn***

***Just remember to keep her charged up and ready to go. Or something.* Ed**

## "Pen friend"

My wonderful Japanese pen friend always sends me loads of great gifts and I do likewise with her. A few days ago it was my birthday and she sent me two packages filled with awesome stuff. One item of which is a gashapon capsule toy containing



# SO TELL ME THIS...

**Your questions answered by the NGC mutha of think**

*1. How long is the main mode in Yoshi's Touch and Go, in terms of gameplay time? I mean, it surely has to have more than two levels?*
*2. Considering how many SNES ports we were given on GBA, how heavily do you think Nintendo will rely on N64 ports for the DS?*
*3. Given the lukewarm reception and questionable ageing of the GBA version of Donkey Kong Country 2, do you think Nintendo will port DKC 3?*
***Marco Belmonte, via email***

***1. It's essentially one of those old-fashioned infinitely repeating games. You repeat two types of level until you lose or get a high score. There's not really an 'end' as such.***
***2. Probably not as heavily as we once expected. The differences between the two machines in terms of control options means Nintendo's own titles will be have to be customised before appearing on DS. Companies with smaller budgets and less incentive to make the DS look innovative may well bring N64 titles directly to DS (Ubisoft's Rayman, for example).***
***3. Yes.***

*I've heard that DS online will have 'hubs' all over the country – you can connect wirelessly to a large network when you are close to one. If this is true then how many of these hubs will there be? I live beside a pretty small village. Will Nintendo be bothered to set these hubs up everywhere or will I have to travel to the nearest city just to play multiplayer? If so, will it be possible to buy some kind of peripheral that connects you to the network, and if it is, then would it cost anything to use, like the internet, and how much would it cost?*
***Niall Groarke, Ireland***

***It sounds like somebody's been telling porkies about those 'hubs'. Like a laptop PC, DS actually connects via wireless routers, which are short-range devices you have either in your own home or at places like internet cafés. To use it at home, you need a broadband connection and one of these router things, which go for upwards of £30. There won't be any extra fees for using DS online, but obviously broadband is going to cost you. We'll print a full tutorial when the first DS online games are available.***

# TIMEWARP

A history lesson that's actually interesting

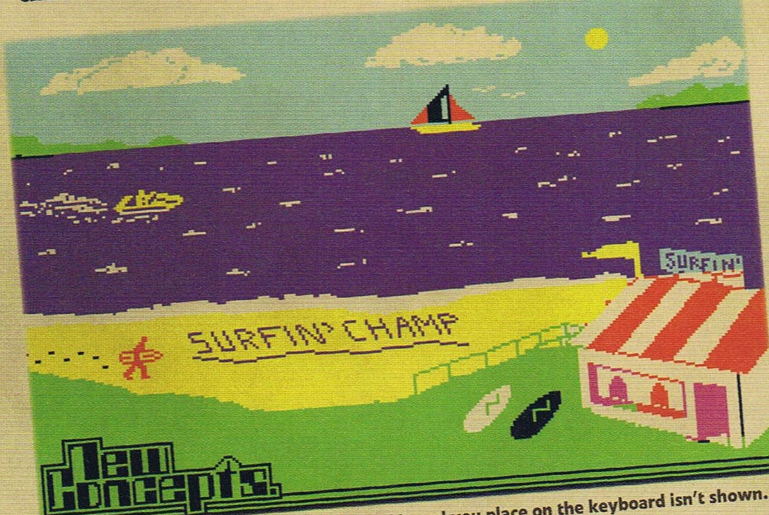


# THE FAMILY TREE

The sordid history of today's bestest games

## Full Tilt

**Think that tilt operated games are a relatively new invention? Think again as we uncover the history of tilting. It all started with Space Invaders don't you know...**




△ *Surf Champ*, unfortunately the small surf board you place on the keyboard isn't shown.

**SPACE INVADERS (1978)**
In many an early arcade game, tilt sensors would end the game pronto if you got shove-happy.

**SURF CHAMP (1985)**
Preposterous attempt at 'real surfing action' on an early computer – place small plastic surfboard on keys and push left and right to surf. Laugh at this.

**POWER GLOVE (1989)**
NES accessory that allowed you to play *Punch Out* with real punches, or control racing games by twisting your wrist. This was truly awful.

**KIRBY TILT 'N' TUMBLE (2001, GAME BOY COLOR)**
Before Nintendo's maddest minds broke out of their cages and ran riot with the DS, they were already 'thinking outside the box' with this, the first game cartridge to feature a built-in tilt sensor.

Kicking things off with a jolt by literally screaming its name at you, *Kirby's Tilt 'n' Tumble* played like crazy flipperless pinball from a planet of chess boards and smiling clouds. The Kirbster – temporarily refusing to bother with his legs – had to be veered around bumpers, over holes, up ramps and into stolen stars, with magic hands required to tilt your way to the top of each level inside nastily tight time limits.

Milking its new bit of technology for all it was worth, Nintendo also threw in five mini-games, including target-shoot test Kirby's Balloon Pop and Kirby Roll-o-Rama – a Game Boy version of those infuriating ball bearing games that come flying out of Christmas crackers. Not a game for Kirby haters, clearly, but it was easy to have your heart melted by his endearingly blank face after you'd clumsily clattered through every barrier in Kirby's Hurdle Race.

Neat though it was, *Tilt 'n' Tumble* showed exactly why *Yoshi's Universal Gravitation* sticks with the left/right twisting fun. Tilting the GB back and forth, and flicking it to make Kirby jump, often meant losing sight of the display completely. Brilliant, yet another quality Nintendo innovation.

**DIDDY KONG PILOT (2001)**
Before it changed its name to *Banjo Pilot*, this skyrace was controlled by tilting the GBA nonstop until your hands were so dizzy they just imploded.

**ROLL-A-RAMA (2002)**
Announced, demo'd but never released – plug a GBA into a Gamecube and spin ball bearings around a warped and undulating mad-map.

**WARIO WARE TWISTED! (2005)**
The twisty-turny simulation of ironing, screwing in lightbulbs and balancing cats on barrels that you'd been waiting for. See page 52 for our review of this handheld masterpiece.



Gaming Family Trees, A Definitive Guide 1003

# WHAT'S OLD IS NEW

News rounded up from the wild world of retrogaming



### FISTS OF FUN

FISTS OF FUN
EA aren't the only ones resurrecting Nintendo's forgotten boxing franchise, *Punch Out!*. Danone (you know – "mmm") has knocked up a remarkable online version of the original NES game, themed around their new 'Frusion Smoothie'. The idea of 'Breakfast Brawl' is to beat up "unsatisfying breakfasts" in favour of an ostensibly 'healthy' Frusion. We ended up with a funny tummy, though, thanks to puns like 'Ray Zinbran' (think about it) and a living cereal bowl spilling his milk-brains all over the canvas for a cat to lap up. Just wrong. Play it at www.frusion.com/game.asp

### HAUNTED NINTENDO

This NES console was originally donated to a thrift store in Mario's hometown of Brooklyn by a gentleman who claimed it belonged to his son "who passed away years ago." Its new owner was subsequently given the shivers by The Haunted Nintendo's habit of making the TV blink occasionally and emit "human voices… mumbling and laughing". Oh, and apparently *it pauses itself*. The cat doesn't like it, either, "running back and forth… in the middle of the night" by way of protest. The Haunted Nintendo eventually attracted 49 bids and sold for $225.53. We ask you.



### COVER UP

Here we go again. The idea for this retro bed covering, manufactured from 100% fleece (no kidding, $30 on eBay), was sparked by the *other* Nintendo blanket we featured last month. The furry NES joypad fits a 6 foot 2 man "perfectly", but we're not sure we'd want anything to do with it after seeing the owner's two cats doing the dirty all over it.

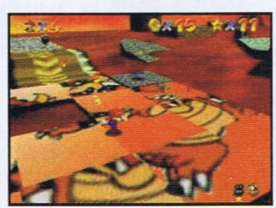




# MARIO COMPLETED IN 20 MINUTES

Now you're all settled in with *Super Mario 64 DS*, try to keep your eyes in as you watch someone complete the Nintendo 64 original in just *20 minutes*. Unsurprisingly, it's not a straight 70-star run (that'd make it one star every 17 seconds – unlikely). Instead, via staggering use of fearful bunnies and stair-climbing techniques that have to be seen to be believed, our new favourite person manages to reach the second and third Bowser battles and complete the game with only 16 stars in his dungaree pockets. Despite making use of a bunny bug, this record breaker has some serious Mario skills and even uses the bum burning lava to jump quickly towards a star in Lethal Lava Land. Watch the video, then try it on DS.
*http://www.archive.org/movies/gamevideos.php*

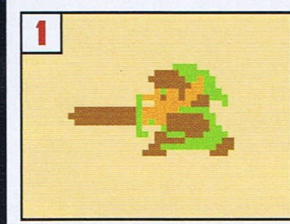






# 5 THINGS

**… Link's many, varied and mostly bad hairstyles**



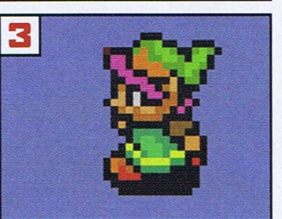
### 1 LEGEND OF ZELDA

Brown, a bit puffy at the front, not unlike the woman behind the bread counter at Tesco – especially with the green eyeliner there. The elf hat may possibly be used to cover a bald patch of extremely premature nature.



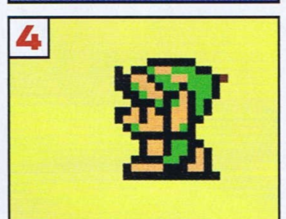
### 2 ADVENTURE OF LINK

Now with greenish tint – to match eyes, *literally*. Could be Link's elfish nature shining through, although it's more likely to be some 20-rupee Hyrulian hair-dye. Spilling out a bit at the back now: mullet alert is at orange.



### 3 LINK TO THE PAST

It's purple. Now looking more than ever like the hairstyle of the old woman sitting at the front of the bus with one of those tartan shopping baskets on wheels. No wonder Zelda prefers the company of Ganon.



### 4 LINK'S AWAKENING

Limited by the Game Boy's primary school colour palette, Link goes blonde – with green highlights, natch. A boy's got to stand out! Note that, unlike most people, Link's ears almost completely cover his hair.



### 5 OCARINA OF TIME

Now approaching ginger, Link empties an entire bottle of hairspray onto his head and wouldn't look out of place at a McFly concert. Little surprise really, that hair's drawing attention away from what could quite possibly be Hyrule's biggest forehead.

# RETRO TAT

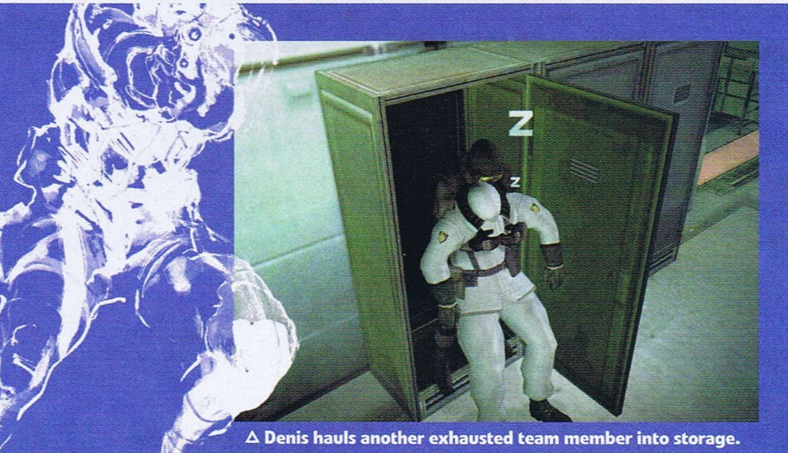
**Mario Golf 64** in mug form: exactly what the world wants!

Someone, somewhere at Nintendo HQ clearly overestimated the demand for *Mario Golf 64* ceramic mugs. Put up for sale on eBay by someone who'd obviously rather be shot of the boxloads they've managed to come into possession of, this set of six Nintendified drinking vessels had already attracted a grand total of zero bids after one day on eBay at the starting price of 99p. Hardly 'love-all', eh? Oh, wait, that's tennis.

**WRITE IN!**
Have you found someone offloading forgotten Nintendo merchandise on a popular online auction site? Tell us and we'll name and shame it – and you – in these very pages. **email ngc@futurenet.co.uk**

# METAL GEAR SOLID THE TWIN SNAKES


ngc00.boxes.mgs_twin.jpg


Δ Denis hauls another exhausted team member into storage.




## AND... CUT

*Metal Gear*'s original cutscenes were reworked into Matrix-rivalling effects-fuelled gobsmackingness by Japanese movie director Ryuhei Kitamura (a close personal friend of Kojima's), who most recently helmed Japan's final Godzilla movie.









So you're quietly eating your lunch in the canteen. That's the canteen at Nintendo headquarters in Kyoto, Japan. The next thing you know, *Mario* mastermind Shigeru Miyamoto and Nintendo overlord Satoru Iwata turn up. They sit down at the table next to you. They're smiling in an odd way. You chat for a bit, and then Miyamoto asks you this: "How would you like to make a *Metal Gear Solid* game?"

That's the kind of story that you might quite reasonably expect to end with, 'and then I woke up.' But for Denis Dyack, big boss of Silicon Knights (partly owned by Nintendo at the time), this was only a dream in the 'came true' sense. Still in shock, he found himself in a meeting the very next day with *Metal Gear* maestro Hideo Kojima, who had shot over from Tokyo at twenty-four hours notice on the Bullet Train. The upshot of the meeting was that the mighty Silicon Knights and the even mightier Konami would join hands, meld minds and bring *Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes* to life.

Not too long after that somewhat unforgettable lunchbreak, Dyack was back in Canada and breaking the news to a team still on the road to recovery having just completed the excellent *Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem.*

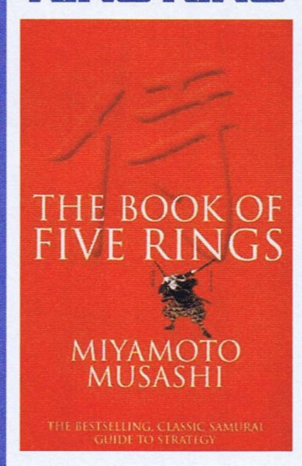
"It was a total shock to them," chuckles Denis. "I just came back and was like 'Hey, I've got some good news!' Everyone was just stunned. It took a couple of weeks to sink in – but everyone got behind the decision right away. There are a lot of *Metal Gear Solid* fans here at Silicon Knights."

The following week, a dozen of those shellshocked Knights were flown over to Konami's plush Tokyo office to start discussions about the intricacies of how *The Twin Snakes* would be brought to the Gamecube. Hideo Kojima would later make the remarkable admission that Silicon Knights were chosen to bring Solid Snake to the Gamecube after he couldn't find a single Japanese development team that he thought capable of doing Metal Gear justice.

In fact, the shape of *The Twin Snakes* – and the name, for that matter – had been settled on long before Denis's incident in Nintendo's canteen. Shigero Miyamoto and Hideo Kojima had been buddying up for a while, and had decided between them that *The Twin Snakes* would be a reimagining of the first *Metal Gear Solid* in the style of its sequel, *Sons of Liberty.* Silicon Knights were in Tokyo that week mainly to "find common ground" with the *MGS* team – although in the end all it took was a dinner held a little while later to reassure Denis that the Canada-Japan partnership would really kick programming ass.

Filed by: Mark Green

## RING RING




***Of all the influences on*** **The Twin Snakes*****, the most perplexing is probably Miyamoto Musashi's The Book of Five Rings, a 17th-century treatise on martial combat that advises the mastery of five types of strategy – Earth, Wind, Fire, Water and The Void – in order to achieve true invincibility. Denis believes this applies to making cutscenes segue seamlessly into sections where you're crawling through ventilation ducts. Er, we think.***

Publisher: Nintendo/Konami
Developer: Silicon Knights
Release date: 26th March 04
Highest Gamecube Pos: 1
Reviewed: NGC/91, 90%

△ Mantis forces Snake to shoot a lady – he will pay, in a hilarious self-referential fashion.

"The two teams got together in Canada," he recalls. "We were talking through Scott Dolph [who was both a translator and Genome Guard voice talent in *Twin Snakes*] about various industry things, and having a really good time. Such a good time, in fact, that after a while Scott just stopped translating. We'd had a little bit too much wine, and Kojima-san and I just continued to talk – and we were thinking 'Yeah, we totally understand each other.' We kept going for two hours! It was funny, but it was also a good sign that we were going to get on really, really well."

The *Metal Gear* game you eventually got to play was around eighty percent the work of Silicon Knights, the rest – mostly made up of cutscenes and the like – was rustled up by Konami in Tokyo. Shigeru Miyamoto himself (who Denis has an unnerving habit of likening to ancient philosopher Aristotle) pitched in, too. And it wasn't just a case of the odd 'GOIN GUD M8S?' text message.

## "TWIN SNAKES WAS BEING WORKED ON LITERALLY 24 HOURS A DAY"

"We ended up scheduling four to five video conference calls a week," says Denis. "We went over to Japan, Konami came over to Canada for up to a month at a time, and the game code was set up so anyone in Ontario or Tokyo could see the latest version, grab it, and make changes. So *The Twin Snakes* was being worked on literally 24 hours a day."

Silicon Knights and Konami worked through the PSone game in rough chronological order – the Cargo Docks, the snowy Helipad, the Holding Cells, the Armoury, the battle with Revolver Ocelot and so on. For each area, they analysed in painstaking detail how it operated, and pinpointed which of Solid Snake's bonus abilities from *MGS2* could be slotted in.

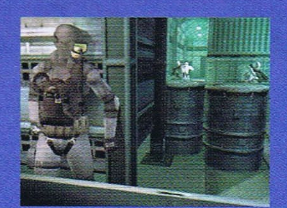
After a couple of months of this, the game script was complete. Now all they needed was their star.

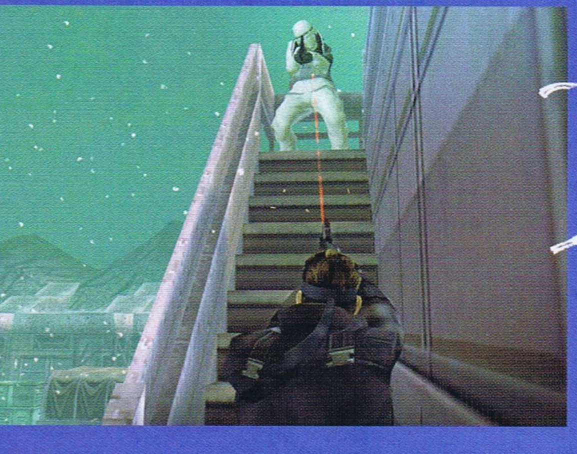
"We had Snake up and running around very quickly," says Denis. "We combined some technology we'd created on Gamecube [for an as-yet unreleased game] with some stuff that Konami had done for *MGS2*. It was a big moment, seeing him up onscreen. Then we got the level detail in – starting with the Helipad area. Seeing all that fall together

### D FOR TWO



*For those never-ending Codec conversations about nuclear winters and the nature of love, life and innocent polar bears, a three-dimensional look for the faces of Snake, Mei Ling, Campbell and the rest would have been easy. But Dyack and Kojima chose to keep the 2D, hand-painted look of the original MGS, for "nostalgia" reasons. After an overlong chat by telephone, no doubt.*






# FORGING METAL

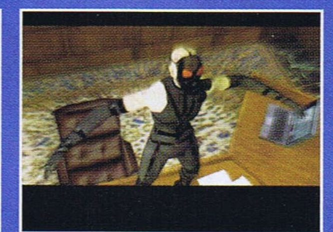
**The reaction between *Metal Gear* and its sequel could have resulted in serious stress for the Silicon Knights team. But it didn't.**



**1** Denis is very proud of recreating the *Sons of Liberty* feature whereby guards 'clear' rooms – working together to sweep an area entirely, rather than chasing after you for a bit then wandering off to do something less exhausting.



**2** Every minute of *MGS* voice acting was re-recorded for *The Twin Snakes*, with almost all the original cast back on board. It gave Denis the chance to sneak in a few touches – like Psycho Mantis yabbering about Shigsy.



**3** The Psycho Mantis battle saw *Twin Snakes* borrow a handful of 'sanity effects' from *Eternal Darkness* – such as the tilting of the screen. Ironic, as Mantis practically invented self-referential player-messing in the first game.



**4** *MGS* essentially gave birth to stealth gaming, but Dyack and team managed to make it even sneakier. It's possible to rack up the ultimate ranking – Big Boss Rank – by not killing anyone. A first for the *Metal Gear* series.

was really magical. Just going from something that looks pretty good to something that's totally beyond your expectations... it was absolutely fantastic."

## "IT'S PROBABLY SOMETHING I'LL REMEMBER FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE"

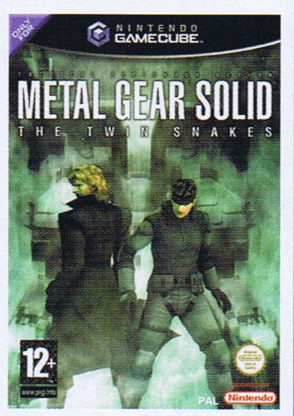
Complex technical frippery, such as bumping up the character polygons from 500 to 3000 each and borrowing shadowing and lighting techniques straight from *Eternal Darkness*, were combined with game improvements, like brain-enhanced guards bunging grenades into a truck if you tried to cower inside until they went away. There was a surprising amount of tweaking to be done for what was essentially a remake. For example, there were no lockers in the original, but the developers wanted Snake to be able to hide the bodies of guards (like in *Sons of Liberty*), so they were added to every corner of Shadow Moses Island.

Entire areas and boss battles had to be redesigned to avoid exposing the seams in the original game. And Nintendo wouldn't have stood for any PlayStation references, hence the Gamecube sitting on a desk in Otacon's laboratory – a substitute for a certain grey games-box that was plonked there in the original.

In May 2003, it was time to go public. Nintendo demo'd *The Twin Snakes* for the first time at E3, and announced – to skyrocketing eyebrows – that Silicon Knights was behind it. Reaction was as positive as Denis had hoped for, although pesky rumours that *Metal Gear Solid 2* would join the original game in the final package dogged him until release day. "We'd have loved to," says Denis now. "But there just wasn't time. There's no possible way we could have done all of that." In fact, the pressure of the ever-ticking clock led to at least one planned feature – GBA connectivity – getting bunged in the trash to give Silicon Knights time to finish the main game.

One of Denis's driving beliefs is that gaming should expressly avoid the free-form play of chart-toppers like *Grand Theft Auto*, instead focusing on a strong storyline or a core message. This – and something about John Carpenter's 1982 movie The Thing that Denis repeatedly confused interviewers with at the time – was something

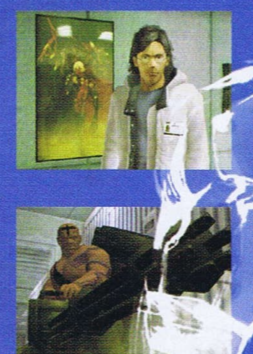
## CO-OP




*Denis sees a big future for pan-global love-ins like* The Twin Snakes. *"Working with Kitamura, Kojima and everyone was just a fantastic experience," he says. "It was a watermark project, with people collaborating all over the globe. I think you'll see a lot more of that, particularly with next-gen games – the East and West working together to combine their two disparate approaches into some really great stuff."*













△ This area had to be completely redesigned for *Twin Snakes* in order to accomodate the first-person view.

he kept in mind as he worked with the "classic story" of *Metal Gear Solid*. With Miyamoto and Kojima bearing down on him to keep the quality high, and a need to satisfy both hardcore Kojima worshippers *and* hardcore Nintendo fans, *The Twin Snakes* had to be perfect.

"Making sure we crafted something that everyone was happy with was our biggest goal," says Denis. "I think we achieved that. Worrying about that during the process, or trying to do the best game you had in the time you have, is a very good indicator of where the stress is. There are always nightmare moments – there were a few bugs. We couldn't track down the reason for them, but we managed to fix them just a couple of days before we sent the discs to be made. But otherwise, I think that *The Twin Snakes* actually went pretty smoothly."

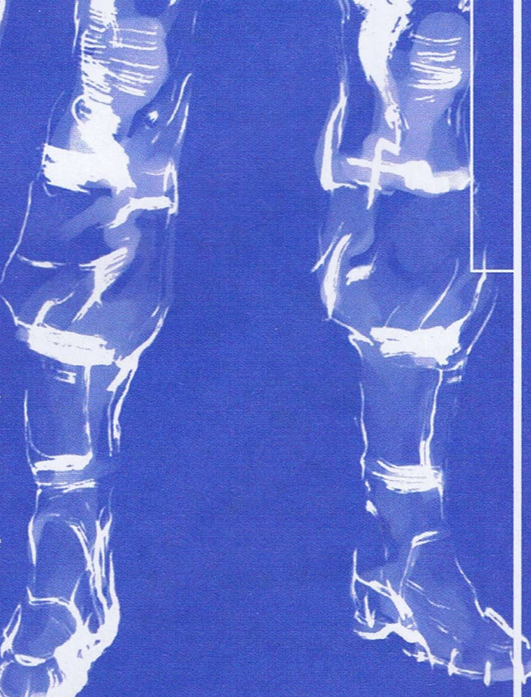
A year on, Dyack says he now "understands what Kojima goes through when making a *Metal Gear* game." But he'll always treasure the hour he spent on stage at E3 2003, shoulder-to-shoulder with Miyamoto and Kojima, showing off the fruits of his labours to the world for the very first time.

"There's always tension and anticipation, of course. We'd never done anything like this before, but the game went over very, very well. And when I think back to being up there together in front of the press, talking about the future and where we see games going… that was one of the high points. It's something I'll remember for the rest of my life."

## END GAME



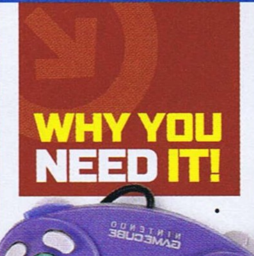
*A year since* The Twin Snakes *writhed its way out of Silicon Knights' HQ, Denis and team have yet to get their knees up. "We did have a small celebration in the office," admits Denis. "But we're still trying to get Kojima and team over to Canada for a big official party. We're hoping it'll happen in the next couple of months. I'm sending emails to say we're still planning it – and they're sending emails to say they're still waiting!"*



# NGC TOP 100

THE BEST GAMECUBE GAMES YOUR MONEY CAN BUY...

WHY YOU NEED IT!

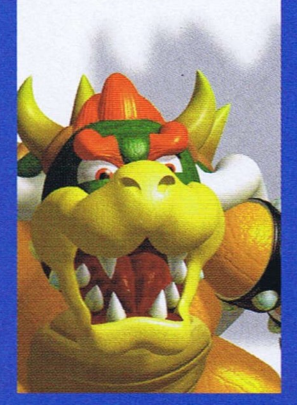



## Your up-to-date guide to the hottest PAL titles.

Games aren't cheap. Even when you buy pre-owned games, it's still a bit gutting to get your bargain treasure home and find you've splashed out on a box of gaming garbage. Hence this buyer's guide – it's got:

- **The 100 top-scoring games, listed in score order so you can begin with the very best.**
- **We tell you which issue it was reviewed in, so if you want to know more you can look through your back issues. You *do* have them, don't you?..**
- **A brief description of the game, so if you don't have that issue you can find out the most important points about it.**
- **Highlighted games, with a little more detail. As games join the list, the highlights will change!**

* deliberate mistake

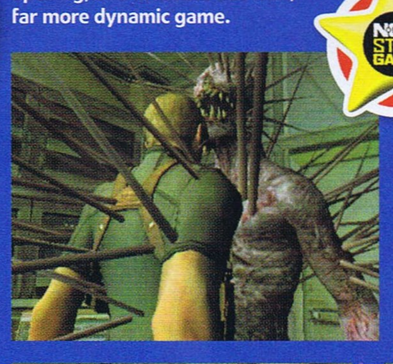


## 1 RESIDENT EVIL 4 — 97

**CAPCOM ■ NGC/104**

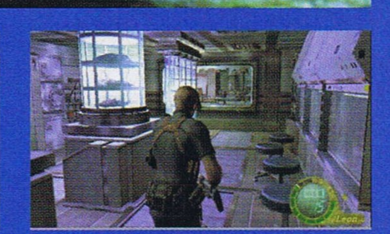
What, no zombies? What's going on? Something spectacular, that's what. This instalment takes the *Resi* series to the next level with an unprecedented amount of innovation. Gone are the three-day-long animations of doors opening, and in comes this new, far more dynamic game.

NGC STAR GAME









## 2 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA THE WIND WAKER — 97

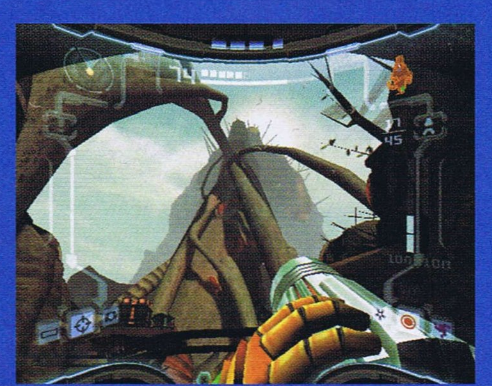
**NINTENDO ■ NGC/81**

The babbling of the internet whingers faded to a stunned silence when this hit the shelves. It's as exquisitely fashioned as a Disney feature film, and doesn't lose any of the gameplay for it. Some sailing sections spoil it a bit, but this is as close to art as games have got.

NGC STAR GAME





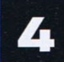
## 3 METROID PRIME — 97

**NINTENDO ■ NGC/76**

Looks absolutely incredible and there's no slowdown, despite the huge, incredibly detailed environments. The action's varied and the puzzles are mind-bending. One of the finest games you'll ever play.

NGC STAR GAME





## 4 SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE — 96

**NINTENDO ■ NGC/73**

Yet again Mario shows other platform 'heroes' how it's really done – in stunning 3D, with responsive controls and an engaging story (about vandalism and poisonous brown slime). Plus a giant water-filled squirty backpack. You need one of those… *(who writes this nonsense? Ed)*






## 5 METROID PRIME 2 ECHOES — 94

**NINTENDO ■ NGC/101**

Another outstanding outing for Samus Aran as she switches between dimensions to save the Luminoth from the Ing. The story is enriched by the logs you find, and Samus has useful new weapons and abilities. The landscapes aren't as varied and awe-inspiring as *Prime's*, but that's our one complaint.






## 6 MARIO KART DOUBLE DASH — 93

**NINTENDO ■ NGC/88**

Crazy courses littered with Chain Chomps and pickup boxes, weapons from slippy bananas to green shells and giant Yoshi eggs, and all your favourite Ninty faces doubling up to race recklessly. The AI's a bit cheaty (a shell *just* as we're about to win? Hmm…) but it's a whole lotta fun.








## 7 F-ZERO GX — 92

**NINTENDO ■ NGC/85**

This is a blisteringly fast racer that manages to keep the pace up without getting the frame rate jitters. You will never accept glitchy graphics again. A few more tracks would've been nice, but with editable vehicles (in addition to the 30+ that come with the game) and a Story mode, why complain?



## 8 PIKMIN 2 — 92

**NINTENDO ■ NGC/99**

Louie, Olimar's assistant, has proved less than efficient at managing the business. Happily, it means they've had to return to Earth for a longer session of collecting treasure. They've got two new types of Pikmin to help them out, too. Bigger, better and even more enjoyable than the original






## 9 SOUL CALIBUR 2 — 91

**NAMCO ■ NGC/85**

Excellent fast-paced fighting. Weapon master mode is your key to unlocking the three hidden characters – but the real star of the show's not hidden! For the Gamecube version, Namco have dropped in Link, complete with bow and arrow. It's the best fighting game on *any* system.



## 10 TIMESPLITTERS 2 — 91

**EIDOS ■ NGC/73**

Travel back through time on the trail of the nefarious 'Splitters. This means shooting things. Your weapons are time-zone appropriate and you'll wage war everywhere from the Wild West to the near future. And you *will* love every minute. The multiplayer's the icing on the cake.




## TOP TEN GBA GAMES



### 1 ADVANCE WARS 1 & 2

Cute-looking turn-based strategy, with a frighteningly addictive, super-challenging core. Honestly, it's better than it sounds. *AW2* is essentially *Advance Wars 1.5*, but it's tweaked to perfection.

### 2 WARIO WARE

Imagine the simple graphics and gameplay of Game & Watch fired at you in five-second bursts. Loopy fun that you'll keep returning to.



### 3 MARIO & LUIGI SUPERSTAR SAGA

An RPG with puzzle and platform elements starring our two top plumbers.



### 4 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST

One of the most memorable outings for Link (alongside *Ocarina of Time*). Comes with bonus *Four Swords* multiplayer adventure.



### 5 SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2

This tweaked version of the SNES classic boasts a massive game world and some of the tightest level designs ever.



### 6 POKÉMON RUBY & SAPPHIRE

The same structure as before – catch 'em all, send 'em into battle – but still the most entertaining RPG out there…



### 7 MARIO KART SUPER CIRCUIT

Nicks the best bits from the SNES and N64 versions, and if you've got four friends, GBAs and cables, they can play too.



### 8 METROID FUSION/ ZERO MISSION

Everything that has ever made *Metroid* great can be found in these two games. A sprawling environment littered with enemies and an imposing difficulty level.



### 9 HARVEST MOON

A slow burner, *HM: Friends of Mineral Town* is a farming/charming sim to die for. It'll last you months.



### 10 STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3

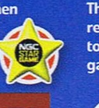
An incredible conversion of one of the best fighters ever. Massive single-player and a brilliant two-player.

# DIRECTORY
Your essential buying guide

## 11 SUPER SMASH BROS. MELEE 91
**NINTENDO ■ NGC/68**
All your Nintendo favourites get together for a phenomenal ruck across a whole range of game worlds. Think Samus could beat Mario? Or that three Jigglypuffs are better than one Link? You'll have massive amounts of fun proving it, by yourself or with friends.



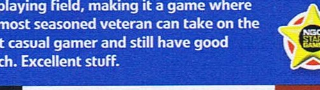
## 12 HARVEST MOON A WONDERFUL LIFE 91
**NINTENDO ■ NGC/91**
Romance the ladies, keep cows and grow veggies as the seasons change… Despite a new chapter structure, this farm sim loses its way a little when you've got your bride and have few new goals apart from hybridising crops, but you'll keep returning to do a bit of milking…



## 13 HITMAN 2 SILENT ASSASSIN 91
**EIDOS ■ NGC/82**
Bald barcoded assassin 47 comes out of retirement and takes on the bad guys with a range of weapons. Not bad for a bloke who spends his time in a shed. You're rewarded for doing things quietly – but how you go about it is up to you, because this is free-form gaming at its finest.



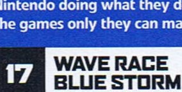
## 14 MARIO POWER TENNIS 91
**NINTENDO ■ NGC/104**
Learn the ins and outs of the new power shots and you're left with an incredibly tactical game. It levels the playing field, making it a game where the most seasoned veteran can take on the most casual gamer and still have good match. Excellent stuff.



## 15 PRINCE OF PERSIA THE SANDS OF TIME 91
**UBISOFT ■ NGC/90**
Ubisoft show other developers how to update classic games without ruining them, as the brilliant 2D platformer gets transformed into an outstanding 3D platformer. Maybe there's too much fighting, and maybe the puzzles are too samey… but really, it all reeks of quality. Superb.



## 16 PAPER MARIO: THE THOUSAND-YEAR DOOR 91
**NINTENDO ■ NGC/100**
With Mario's papery ability to fold himself into a paper plane or turn sideways to become nigh-invisible, plus a great fighting mechanism and rippable scenery, this is a brilliant example of Nintendo doing what they do best – making the games only they can make.



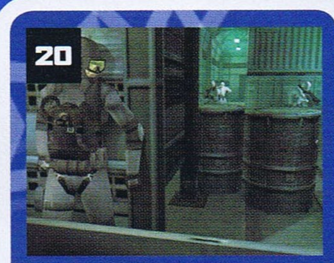
## 17 WAVE RACE BLUE STORM 90
**NINTENDO ■ NGC/67**
A few tiny frame rate problems hamper the PAL version of this aquatic racer, but it is still a fabulous game. It's convincingly speedy and it looks wonderful – the water effects will leave you staggered. The controls are intuitive and effective. In short, this is absolute magic.



## 18 VIEWTIFUL JOE 90
**CAPCOM ■ NGC/84**
Some people love the unusual looks, some people hate them. Either way, get past the cel shading and this 2D-yet-3D beat-'em-up impresses. Elements like speeding up and slowing down time during battles only adds to the cinematic feel. It can be frustrating, but you'll love it anyway.

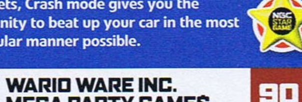
## 19 SECOND SIGHT 90
**CODEMASTERS ■ NGC/97**
Excellent psychic stealth-'em-up. Who are you? Why are you here? All will be revealed – if you survive. The levels are tightly designed, offering scope for replay, while its distinctive style and original touches make it one of the most memorable games we've played in years.

## 20 METAL GEAR SOLID THE TWIN SNAKES 90



**KONAMI ■ NGC/91**
This is a superb stealth action, with a more than healthy pedigree. A great story combined with revamped graphics to make this old PlayStation title blossom on Gamecube. The voice acting and music are superb. The only problems are the long, unskippable cutscenes, the short length and possibly too many bosses. We're just picky, though, this is a really, really good game that we'd definitely recommend.

## 21 BURNOUT 2 90
**ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80**
The best realistic racer on Gamecube. It looks great, it's wonderfully fast, and then there are the crashes… When you've had fun roaring round the streets, Crash mode gives you the opportunity to beat up your car in the most spectacular manner possible.



## 22 WARIO WARE INC. MEGA PARTY GAMES 90
**NINTENDO ■ NGC/97**
A quickfire succession of hilarious five-second mini-games are blasted at you and up to three friends. With tasks like nose picking, cat poking and banana peeling, it's wholeheartedly original,outlandishly quirky and very good fun. Thoroughly recommended.



## 23 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE 1 & 2 90
**ATARI ■ NGC/78**
This online RPG will devour huge chunks of your life. Get ready for lots of menu screens, numbers and bashing crates. Note: 1) you'll need a broadband adaptor to play online – good luck finding one of *those*. 2) Third-party memory cards are prone to corrupt with this. Don't risk 'em.



## 24 1080° AVALANCHE 90
**NINTENDO ■ NGC/89**
More of a racer than a trick-based snowboarder, although jumps, spins and flips are all there. Short courses and a fair bit of pace keep things feeling tight. The time trialling modes are the best bits – Gate Trial will have you trying to shave seconds off your time for months.

## TOP FIVE PLATFORM GAMES

**SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE**
A tour-de-force of everything good gaming should be.

**PRINCE OF PERSIA**
An innovative time-rewinding twist and excellent puzzles make this essential.

**LUIGI'S MANSION**
Yes. it's a little easy, but you'll enjoy every second.

**DONKEY KONG: JUNGLE BEAT**
The platformer you play using bongos.

**RAYMAN 3 HOODLUM HAVOC**
Can't touch *Sunshine*, but it's entertaining and looks 'the bomb'.

## TOP FIVE RACING GAMES



**MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!!**
Single-player mode looks as cute as ever, but it's rock hard and cheaty.

**F-ZERO GX**
Expertly crafted arcade fun. Really rockets along.

**WAVE RACE BLUE STORM**
Classic Nintendo action with dazzling water effects.

**BURNOUT 2**
Fast car racing combined with steel-crunching crashes.

**EXTREME G 3**
The weapons are what make this future racer shine.

## 25 NBA STREET V3 90
**EA ■ NGC/104**
Arcade-style basketball in which Mario, Luigi and Peach join the roster of real NBA players for some outrageously acrobatic slam-dunking action. A new dunk contest and (sort of) customised trick system make this a pretty special package even without Mazza & co.



## 26 ANIMAL CROSSING 90
**NINTENDO ■ NGC/98**
Ever fancied leaving home and living in a town populated by animals? The full teenage Dr Moreau experience can be yours, complete with N64 graphics and strange noises. Somehow it's horribly addictive, as you improve your house, fill the museum and get a life.



## 27 SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS 90
**ATARI ■ NGC/81**
Vast boat-based RPG ported from the Dreamcast. "It'll change your life as you know it," our RPG fanatic assures us. The spaces in between the meat of your quest (for some missing moonstones) are stuffed with the usual RPG battling, puzzle solving and shopping.



## 28 CONFLICT DESERT STORM 2 90
**SCI ■ NGC/86**
Even better than the last *CDS*, but again very brown and set during the first Gulf war. There's a new aspect to this one: you're not allowed to let any of your men die, which leads to all sorts of life-saving heroics and more opportunity for you to 'get to know' your squad member



## 29 WORMS 3D 90
**SEGA ■ NGC/87**
You know the score. You have four worms. Your worms must kill other worms. The special weapons are as crazy as ever (Sheep, the Holy Hand Grenade). The only real difference is that it's now in 3D, which will affect your strategies for the better. A multiplayer blast

## 30 ETERNAL DARKNESS 89



**NINTENDO ■ NGC/74**
A Lovecraftian horror that sees you playing as a dozen different characters to fight off a dark, shambling evil. As you see more, your sanity meter falls and when that drops to the bottom… This is a survival horror that spans twenty centuries of history. It's not another *Resi* clone, there's more to it than that. There are a few weaknesses in the combat, but other than that it's nearly perfect.

## 31 LEGEND OF ZELDA FOUR SWORDS 89
**NINTENDO ■ NGC/102**
This is an obscure *Zelda* game that's pretty hard on the pockets – in multiplayer mode, each of the four players needs a GBA and link cable. Nonetheless, it's great fun, very amusing and would've scored more highly if the best bit of the Japanese version, Tetra's Trackers was included.

### 32 RESIDENT EVIL 89
**CAPCOM ■ NGC/72**
Compelling survival horror. Play as Jill if you want to take things gently, Chris if you're feeling hardcore. Then immerse yourself in this puzzle-solving, zombie-battling frightfest. There's a bit of backtracking and the puzzles are annoying, but they don't hamper it too much.

### 33 SPLINTER CELL 89
**UBI SOFT ■ NGC/81**
Only Sam Fisher and his various high-tech gadgets like sticky bombs and camera disruptors stand between terrorists and the Free World. It's the usual stealth 'em up stuff, but done with a fair degree of flair and polish. If you like this (and it's dirt cheap) you'll love the two sequels.

### 34 SSX 3 89
**EA ■ NGC/87**
Snowboard around one giant mountain, entering races or showing off tricks. Complete all three peaks and you'll get the chance to spend 15-30 minutes tricking your way down the whole mountain. The frame rate can be glitchy, and it's not quite as free-roaming as it seems at first, but it's a superb game.

### 35 DONKEY KONGA 88
**NINTENDO ■ NGC/99**
Drum along to a soundtrack, following the symbols on screen for left bongo, right bongo, both bongos or clap. It's the sort of game that almost anyone can pick up and play. It's also completely addictive and tremendous fun. Despite the extra bongos costing £20 a set, the multiplayer's worth the expense.

### 36 PRINCE OF PERSIA WARRIOR WITHIN 88
**UBISOFT ■ NGC/102**
The Prince is older and his game's got more 'mature' (so, scantily-clad ladies and smart-arsed comments have been dropped in). It's still great to look at and great to play, with trickier puzzles than the first game, and although the fighting's a bit dodgy, the rest of it more than outweighs that problem.

### 37 TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2005 88
**EA ■ NGC/98**
This is a big game. There are probably lost tribes in there if you play for long enough – but you won't see them if you have other interests, like a job or social life. More ball control, famous opponents, the ability to create your own golfer, 14 courses (11 of them new)… You can't get bigger or better than this.

### 38 LUIGI'S MANSION 88
**NINTENDO ■ NGC/67**
The most annoying thing about Luigi's own adventure is that it's TOO SHORT. That apart, his escapades in his newly-acquired haunted house play like a combination of *Super Mario World* and Ghostbusters. The man in the green hat has done himself proud with this one.

### 39 SUPER MONKEY BALL 88
**ATARI ■ NGC/67**
The first ingenious update of old classic *Marble Madness*, with encapsulated monkeys rolling around bizarre landscapes collecting bananas. Mini-games include obvious ballgames like pool and golf, oddities like a tilting boxing ring and even a monkey version of *Mario Kart*.

### 40 TIMESPLITTERS FUTURE PERFECT 88
**NINTENDO ■ NGC/105**
Maybe it should have been called Timesplitters 2.5, but there's no denying this is a top-of-the-range first-person shooter. The multiplayer mode is vast and loads of fun, and the story mode is now a lot morecoherent as a single-player game.

## TOP FIVE FIGHTING GAMES



**SOUL CALIBUR 2**
Gorgeous Link-fuelled beat-'em-up from fight kings Namco.

**SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE**
All your favourite Ninty types pounding each other's faces in.

**VIEWTIFUL JOE**
Absolutely spectacular single player fighter.

**DEF JAM VENDETTA**
The wrestling game that appeals to non-grapple fans as well.

**VIEWTIFUL JOE 2**
"More of the same" sequel, but it's still great fun.

## TOP FIVE SHOOTING GAMES



**METROID PRIME**
Tough as nails shooting-heavy sci-fi adventure.

**TIME-SPLITTERS 2**
Classy first-person shooting from the *GoldenEye* boys.

**STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER**
Looks great and lacks the ropy on-foot sections of the sequel.

**XIII**
Euro-shooter with comic-book looks and very serious violence.

**IKARUGA**
A pure arcade shooter that's tougher than most.

### 41 NBA STREET V2 88
**EA ■ NGC/84**
You don't need a serious basketball sim – this one is stacks of fun, and unless those real-life stats are really vital to your enjoyment of a game, *NBA Street's* got everything you need. Three-on-three action, stunt combos and special moves, all crammed into a fast-moving game.




### DONKEY KONG JUNGLE BEAT 87
**NINTENDO ■ NGC/103**
Get out those bongos, it's time to change your gaming habits. Guide Donkey Kong through the jungle to collect bananas by tapping the drums (the left drum makes him go left, the right one, right and both at the same time makes him jump), and beat bosses by clapping your hands. It'll pull you in so much you'll need a Radox bath to soothe aching arm muscles. The only real slip up is lack of a multiplayer mode.

### 43 MADDEN NFL 2005 87
**EA ■ NGC/99**
The main change here is the hit stick, which lets you decide how much physical impact your tackles have. Apart from that and a few tweaks to defensive plays and franchise mode, it's pretty much business as usual. If you're a fan of the previous games and feel that you need an update, this is the game for you.

### 44 DEF JAM VENDETTA 87
**MAJESCO ■ NGC/82**
All your favourite rappers get together to give wrestling games a kick up the booty. Start as a mere rookie and fight your way through the likes of DMX, Redman and Ludacris, and play the part of your girlfriend as she catfights with other lissome lovelies. Need we mention the great hip-hop soundtrack?

### 45 TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3 87
**ACTIVISION ■ NGC/67**
Absolutely stinks of PS2 – go on, smell it! – but it's such good fun that it doesn't really matter. You'll find masses of grinds and stunts, a range of locations… Come on, this is Tony Hawk. Before he got in with Bam Margera and started clowning around in cars. You know exactly what this is like…

### 46 LOST KINGDOMS 2 87
**ACTIVISION ■ NGC/81**
*Lost Kingdoms 2* is a lovely looking card-based RPG – statophiles are going to love building their decks, collecting new cards to add to it and crunching numbers. It's nicely broken up into a series of small and easily digestible pieces.

### 47 STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER 87
**ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68**
Without a doubt the best Star Wars game on Gamecube, both in the way it looks and the way it plays. Take part in the battle of Hoth and whizz your ship down the trench to destroy the Death Star. Note: the whole thing has since been included as a two-player co-op game in *Rogue Squadron III*.

### 48 VIEWTIFUL JOE 2 87
**ACTIVISION ■ NGC/105**
The sequel to *Viewtiful Joe* is a bit more of the same. There's no revolutionary gameplay here, unfortunately. Instead the game seems to take assured and considered steps forward to slightly alter the gameplay and therefore the puzzles involved. But that doesn't mean this isn't great fun.

### 49 BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL 86
**UBISOFT ■ NGC/90**
Wonderful-looking action adventure with you finding rare animals and tackling an alien invasion. The visuals are stunning and the speech and effects make the grade too. Even the mini-games are fun. The world is huge and detailed, but the slightly easy difficulty means it won't last as long as you'd like.

### 50 FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLE 86
**NINTENDO ■ NGC/91**
Multiplayer RPG for up to four players – but each one will need a GBA and link cable, making this expensive if you're to play it properly. The order in which you pick up spells can be a bit random and the players' shared air bubble can be claustrophobic, but all in all this is good looking and ambitious.

### 51 WARIO WORLD 86
**NINTENDO ■ NGC/83**
Punching, pounding portly fun. That's fun with a capital F (and U and N)! The meths-swilling anti-Mario gets his very own game and it's every bit as mad as you'd expect. Gather garlic to boost your strength and embark on a (too short) escapade that combines platforming and fighting. Wah-hah-haaaa!

### 52 BURNOUT 86
**ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67**
This was an absolutely killer racer in its day that was improved on massively by its sequel. Despite the spectacular crashes, inch-perfect handling and smooth frame rate, we'd still recommend you buy *Burnout 2* because it's got all that and so much more. Not that you'd be unhappy with this, far from it!

### 53 BILLY HATCHER AND THE GIANT EGG 86
**SEGA ■ NGC/87**
Bright and bouncy, you'll have the 'la-la-la' theme tune stuck in your head for days after playing this bizarre, very Japanese, platformer. Were it not for the annoyingly glitchy later levels and the poor camera, this would be a classic. Who'd have thought rolling an egg around could be so much fun?

### 54 PIKMIN 86
**NINTENDO ■ NGC/80**
Only Shigsy could've come up with a real-time-strategy game set in a garden. Olimar's first visit to Earth was a resource-management revelation. You have 100 Pikmin to carry out your commands as you try to rebuild your ship before you run out of air. And it looked as wonderful as it played. Just too short.

### 55 XIII 86
**UBISOFT ■ NGC/88**
Unusual graphics – cel shaded characters and scenes, plus comic-style effects (sequences of images, guns that literally go 'bam') set this FPS apart from the gun-toting crowd. Your sixth sense and a bit of stealth help to vary the pace as you set about solving the conspiracy and recovering your memory.

### 56 NFL 2K3 86
**ATARI ■ NGC/79**
Possibly not as much fun as *Madden*, owing to the amount of work you have to put in to get your 11 bruisers playing together effectively. However, the enormous franchise mode and great sound and graphics make this a decent enough game of American football, if a tad out-of-date.

# DIRECTORY

Your essential buying guide

### 57 THE LORD OF THE RINGS RETURN OF THE KING — 86

**EA ■ NGC/87**

Orc-slashing, goblin-gutting goodness featuring your favourite film fellowship. With more playable characters than *The Two Towers* (most notably, Gandalf is now in the mix), this takes you from Helm's Deep through to the defeat of Sauron at the Crack of Doom.

### 58 NBA LIVE 2004 — 86

**EA ■ NGC/88**

Under the polished EA Sports surface lies the expected impressively deep layer of substance. The licensed music and players are supported by a strong bedrock of stats and facts and character creation tools. Overall control has been improved and you've got more offensive options. It's soulless but slick.

### 59 RESIDENT EVIL ZERO — 85

**CAPCOM ■ NGC/78**

Controlling two characters (Rebecca and Billy), you shoot your way through the usual hordes of zombies and monsters, solving puzzles to progress. Fab cutscenes and in-game visuals mean this looks a treat, and it's got bags of the old *Resi* atmosphere – a coppery, bloody, fear-filled atmosphere…

### 60 MARIO GOLF TOADSTOOL TOUR — 85

**NINTENDO ■ NGC/95**

For a *Mario* game, there's a surprising lack of Ninty-ness in many of the courses. It's just not as whacky as we'd like. And there's plenty of room for sensible in, say, *Tiger Woods*. That aside, it's easy to pick up the controls and the graphics are crisp and shiny. Plenty of modes and unlockables add longevity.

### 61 IKARUGA — 85

**ATARI ■ NGC/80**

Its toughness is the stuff of legend, even on the easy difficulty. Your little spaceship fires white and black projectiles, and you have to shoot the black and white nasties with their opposite colour. There are only five of the well-designed levels, but it will take you a while to see them all.

### 62 FIFA FOOTBALL 2004 — 85

**EA ■ NGC/87**

The best footie sim on Gamecube (unless you import *Winning Eleven* from Japan), with around 400 licensed, face-scanned players, licensed teams and stadia. The free kick system's been tweaked, and corner-taking's menu-driven. So, a single game or a whole career? It's all here.

### 63 EXTREME G3 — 85

**ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67**

An underrated gem, this. It's very fast, the tracks are huge, sprawling and well-designed and you'll find some very cunning uses for the inventive weapons you acquire. The only down side is that it's a bit soulless. The multiplayer's also nowhere near as good as it could (or should) have been.

### 64 SPLINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY — 85

**UBISOFT ■ NGC/106**

This was the game that was supposed to give the *Splinter Cell* series a kick up the arse, unfortunately that didn't happen, instead it got a spring cleaning. But, there's plenty to keep you occupied and the two player co-operative is great fun.

### 65 SPIDER-MAN 2 — 84

**ACTIVISION ■ NGC/96**

How long have we been waiting for a game that actually makes us feel like a superhero? Well, it's here! Freely swinging through an enormous city, you'll actually feel the joy of doing whatever a spider can. It's not detailed and some of the quests and missions get samey, but still… that swinging!

### 66 JUDGE DREDD DREDD VS DEATH — 84

**VIVENDI ■ NGC/89**

Mega City One comes to life. Sadly, it's not an especially *long* life, but while it lasts you get to play as ol' chinny himself, solving crimes, nailing perps and eventually tracking down the Dark Judges. The setting and story are spot-on. Apart from the length, the fiddly controls are the other letdown.

### 67 POKÉMON COLOSSEUM — 84

**NINTENDO ■ NGC/93**

The *Pokémon* series gains an RPG! Your task is to save the Shadow Pokémon from Darkness and destroy the powers of the people corrupting the poor critters! Aww. Really, though, it's an awful lot of fighting and you'll need a GBA *Pokémon* title to get the most out of the colosseum mode.

### 68 TALES OF SYMPHONIA — 84

**NINTENDO ■ NGC/100**

Tales of Symphonia is very much a traditional RPG, and a very good looking one at that. The characters are beautifully designed and the specific locations you enter throughout the adventure are all, without exception, stunning. The only real downer in the visual stakes is the relatively ugly overworld. The rubbish, clichéd dialogue will irritate, though. Other than that, however, this is highly recommended.

### 69 RAYMAN 3 HOODLUM HAVOC — 84

**UBISOFT ■ NGC/78**

*Rayman* manages to create a fun platformer, despite the fact that he seems to be stuck in an age when this kind of thing was considered revolutionary. As well as this there's his inability to add anything new to the genre. But it's bright, it's solid and it's got some enjoyable mini-games. It doesn't get boring and the difficulty curve is scaled just right.

### 70 ISS2 — 83

**KONAMI ■ NGC/68**

This series was untouchable, but then EA found out and made their *FIFA* games better. They have ramped up their quality while the GC ISS seemed much slower and your players had huge turning circles. *ISS2* is a great game, but we expected so much more of it and these expectations weren't met.

### 71 ROGUE SQUADRON III REBEL STRIKE — 83

**ACTIVISION ■ NGC/88**

It's not without its flaws and there is room for improvement. Star Wars is all about screaming TIE fighters and taking on Star Destroyers, not poncing around on foot. The on-foot sections ruin the excitement of the rest of the game. But it looks and sounds great, and the two-player *Rogue Leader* rules.

### 72 SERIOUS SAM NEXT ENCOUNTER — 83

**TAKE 2 ■ NGC/94**

Don't be fooled by the name, this is very silly indeed. For a mere £20 you can spend hours gunning down wave after wave of brightly-coloured aliens across a range of historical locations. Okay, the killing can get a bit relentless, but for a bit of blasting fun, Sam's the man. Never mind the depth, feel the speed!

## TOP FIVE ADVENTURE /RPGS

**ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER**
Phenomenal. A reason to own Gamecube itself.

**TALES OF SYMPHONIA**
A beautiful and epic RPG with the best battle system on Gamecube.

**PHANTASY STAR ONLINE**
A number-cruncher that turns epic with a bit of t'internet.

**SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS**
If 'classic' RPGs are your bag, this boy'll be a sackful of joy.

**LOST KINGDOMS II**
Polished RPG with card collecting elements. Neat.

## TOP FIVE ACTION ADVENTURE

**RESIDENT EVIL 4**
Takes the *Resident Evil* series by new heights by cranking up the action.

**HITMAN 2**
Compelling assassin sim that kills the competition dead.

**SECOND SIGHT**
Brilliant psychic stealth-'em-up from the *'Splitters 2* team.

**MGS: THE TWIN SNAKES**
Beautifully updated version of Solid Snake's first outing.

**ETERNAL DARKNESS**
Another Nintendo exclusive that never fails to entertain.

### 73 BATEN KAITOS — 83

**NAMCO ■ NGC/106**

Role-playing adventure, with card-based battles. This game is unique and delivers a wonderful, magical and fantastical world; the stunning vistas, towns and interiors are awash with lavish colours. It is let down by stilted and painfully wooden voice acting.

### 74 FREEDOM FIGHTERS — 83

**EA ■ NGC/86**

Less serious than the *Desert Storm* series, this is an enjoyable squad-based third-person shooter. Many of the levels interact with each other, so objectives completed in one mission will affect the events in another. Forget the serious side, this is pure fun.

### 75 TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2 — 82

**ACTIVISION ■ NGC/100**

Tony Hawk rumbles on. This time the graphics have a more cartoony feel, and Story mode features a lot of Bam Margera. Some bits don't belong in a skateboard game, like driving vehicles and walking. Those bits are rubbish. The rest is great, and includes chunks of the first three games – with timer!

### 76 SUPER MONKEY BALL 2 — 82

**ATARI ■ NGC/78**

If games teach you one thing, it's this: out of balls, monkeys want you dead. And they probably carry guns. Inside balls (WHERE A MONKEY BELONGS!), the little creatures are a delight. *SMB2* offers you a wide array of mini-games and over 100 levels to roll your imprisoned simian around.

### 77 METAL ARMS GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM — 82

**VIVENDI ■ NGC/88**

Hard – like Ray Winstone in a steel top hat. This robot shoot-'em-up is tough right from the difficult training level. The enemies are extremely resilient and have superb AI, so you need to be accurate and quick. The camera can be awkward and landscape hazards (e.g. water is instantly fatal) can be unfairly harsh.

### 78 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE EP III CARD REV. — 82

**SEGA ■ NGC/94**

This is a new idea for *Phantasy Star Online* – card-based battling. Following on from the events in *Phantasy Star Online 1&2*, you now have to choose a side (either the Arkz or the Heroside) and do battle by rolling dice and selecting cards. You really need to be familiar with the events from the original *PSO* to get the most out of it and you'll also require an elusive broadband adaptor… Good luck finding one!

### 79 THE SIMS BUSTIN' OUT — 82

**EA ■ NGC/89**

Having spent their previous game imprisoned in their home, this installment sees your virtual people freed from their prison as you send them out to work. It still doesn't look great and it doesn't sound too great, but, as with all games with no absolute goal, it will last you for a very, very long time.

## 80 NFL STREET 2 — 81

**EA ■ NGC/103**

The game that tears up the rulebook and gives you a licence to run like hell. This sequel boasts a new ability that allows you to run around the walls *Prince of Persia*-style to gain height when running, catching or passing a scrum. A quality package.



## 81 LEGEND OF ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME — 81

**NINTENDO ■ NGC/80**

This game is nothing short of an absolute bargain. Although the graphics haven't been updated and it still looks pretty much the same as the N64 version, that doesn't mean that the gameplay isn't up to scratch. The Master Quest version has tougher dungeons and different puzzles from the original *OOT*. Forget the graphics – it's an old game – and immerse yourself in Rinkydink's earlier outing.

## 82 AGGRESSIVE INLINE — 81

**ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72**

This is a top-class roller blading sim. Having wheels that stay attached to your feet when they're off the floor means that you can pull off moves like swinging around lampposts. There's even a career mode. On the negative side, the soundtrack is quite frankly rubbish and the graphics are a little bland.

## 83 THE SIMS — 81

**EA ■ NGC/79**

Your Sim has to do all the things a real person would – leave home, make friends, find a partner, eat, sleep and go to the lav. Yet it's all done in a bizarrely addictive way. There's no point to it, but that's life for you: meaningless, but you want to keep doing it.

## 84 F1 CAREER CHALLENGE — 81

**EA ■ NGC/83**

Ever wanted to indulge in the life of an F1 driver? Now you can... There are a series of trials to prove you can handle the F1 disciplines. Then you can get on with the racing, which looks good, shifts well and handles nice.

## 85 NHL 2005 — 80

**EA ■ NGC/99**

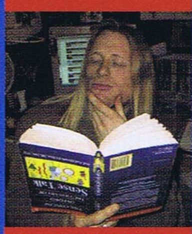
This is a slick, quick game of hockey, but if you dislike the sport, there simply won't be enough here to convince you that it's worthwhile. For the fans, though, it's easy to learn and you can rack up huge scores. Good fun.

## 86 MORTAL KOMBAT DEADLY ALLIANCE — 80

**MIDWAY ■ NGC/77**

The fighting system's been vastly overhauled from earlier *MKs*, although it's far too easy to get an infinite by button mashing. The lack of ring outs and stage-specific finishers is disappointing. Still, you've got three fighting styles per character, a ton of unlockables and loads of gore. Best with two players.

## PAUL'S SENSE TALK



**STERE-EREO**

This lunchtime, I bought a sound system with 6 speakers – for my only 2 ears. It just feels like I've been had.

**TIREDY-POPS?**

So we all know that one shouldn't let the bedbugs bite. How the hell do you avoid it? A guard flea? A pack of attack lice? An insomniac Tick-ninja polishing a little shotgun? Well?

**KORTEZ.CO.UK**

Just checkin' no-one's forgot about us, or anything ;o)

Come and visit us soon, we'll put the kettle on...

**SELL OUT**

It's not so much of a problem being a sell-out, but the level to which your virtue is negotiable does make a difference.

**COMPUTER NON-SENSE**

"640K ought to be enough for anybody."
***Bill Gates***
1981

"Computers in the future may weigh no more than 1.5 tons."
***Popular Mechanics Magazine***
1949

**Do you have more 'sense' than our Sense-spewing Art monkey?**

More than likely! So send 'em in. The best get printed, and if you're really lucky, he may send you a small bag of collected desk smeg, and a 'lightly used' cotton bud.

Send them to him at **paul.edwards@futurenet.co.uk** or to Sense Talk at the usual address.

## 87 BALDUR'S GATE DARK ALLIANCE — 80

**VIVENDI ■ NGC/81**

Endlessly battling goblins and their ilk can get tedious, but if you've ever played D&D you'll enjoy levelling up and spending your EXP. However, it's a lazy port from PS2, with slowdown and a jittery frame rate. Nonetheless, the game still looks a treat.

## 88 PAC-MAN VS — 80

**NAMCO ■ NGC/90**

This tiny gem is free – but only when you buy another, inferior full-priced title (*R: Racing Evolution*). While *Pac-Man Vs* isn't a complex title, the four-player mechanic works well. Think of it as a trifle to have fun with between serious gaming sessions. You'll need a Game Boy and link cable to play it properly.

## 89 DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NY — 80

**EA ■ NGC/99**

More fighting style/ More stylin' fight/ If only they'd/ Got the frame rate right.
Yes, this is actually much better than *Def Jam Vendetta*, with a great fighting system and brilliant have-a-go crowds, but the jerkiness (graphical scratching...?) ruins it.

## 90 THE SIMPSONS HIT AND RUN — 80

**VIVENDI ■ NGC/87**

After a succession of gaming stinkers, the Simpsons take a tip from the *Grand Theft Auto* series and set about stealing cars, taking on missions and doling out a bit of cartoon-style violence. It's not original by any stretch of the imagination, but it is loads of fun.

## 91 MARIO PARTY 5 — 80

**NINTENDO ■ NGC/89**

Ain't no party like a Mario Party. Except all the other parties in the series. This console-based boardgame is one of the best yet, but is still really only good as a multiplayer game. The boardgame bits are a little slow and dull, but the mini-games – popping other players' inner tubes, mech fights – are hilarious.

## 92 DIE HARD VENDETTA — 80

**VIVENDI ■ NGC/74**

WARNING: Do not play this in earshot of old people. We're sure The Vest never swore quite like this. However, he did enjoy a fair bit of gunplay, excellent set-pieces and cheesy dialogue. This has plenty of all three, all hampered by cumbersome controls and frustrating sections. Yippee-kay-ay, melon farmer.

## 93 POOL PARADISE — 80

**IGNITION ■ NGC/92**

Not just UK pool – poke your cue at eight-ball, nine-ball and stunt tables too, if that's what fills your triangle. Using the analogue stick to power your cue is a nice touch, and darts and *Dropzone* feature as minigames. Earth shattering? No. But it's all solid and playable, as you'd expect.

## 94 PUYO POP FEVER — 80

**SEGA ■ NGC/91**

*Puyo Pop*: if you've never heard of it, you must have started gaming all of a week ago. It's quite simple: match coloured blobs that drop from the top of the screen and – hey presto! – they disappear. How radical is that? Two-player's a whole lot more fun than you'd think, too.

## 95 HARRY POTTER & THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN — 79

**EA ■ NGC/95**

A *Potter* title that actually works pretty well as a game! Whatever next? The way you use the differing skills of Harry, Ron and Hermione to solve problems adds interest to a (we're being kind here) rather thin storyline. The controls are a bit iffy, but the atmosphere's spot-on. Not just for Potter fans.

## 96 NFL STREET — 79

**EA ■ NGC/90**

American football isn't quite brought to the masses by *NFL Street*. Even though the strategy's dumbed down it's still very stoppy-starty and so can be slightly drawn-out. We'd also have liked a custom play editor or a whacky training mode to help players get to grips with the basic plays.

## 97 BEACH SPIKERS — 79

**ATARI ■ NGC/72**

Not to everyone's taste – although developers AM2 have at least abandoned the jigglies and concentrated on making a proper sports sim. You'll need lightning-quick reactions and good team control to succeed. Its single-player appeal is limited, so you'll need to play with friends to get the most from it.

## 98 CAPCOM VS SNK 2 EO — 79

**CAPCOM ■ NGC/72**

Enormous depth and an avalanche of play modes give the game longevity – versus mode will last you for ages – but it doesn't work well with the GC's joypad (specials on the C-stick? Cheapness abounds!) and so you'll really need to shell out for an arcade stick. It's pretty ugly too.

## 99 DAKAR 2 — 79

**ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80**

Two problems with this: it's basically one big time trial (and you can find a time trial mode in any racing game) and there aren't any real opponents. The handling of your vehicle and the varied courses between Paris and Dakar make up for it. A fun drive, just not a very competitive one.

## 100 NBA COURTSIDE 2002 — 79

**NINTENDO ■ NGC/68**

There's a wealth of basketball games available for your Gamecube and this is far from the worst, with all the passing, dunking and other ball-based moves you could ask for. However, it's not the best or most recent either. *NBA Street V3* or *NBA Live 2004* would be our preferred choices.



CENSORED!

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